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A PEOPLE'S HISTORY OF GERMANY

by

A. Ramos Oliveira

"Absorbing"

—*New Statesman*

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by

A. RAMOS OLIVEIRA

Translated by

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CHAPTER ONE

THE FIRST STEPS OF THE BOURGEOISIE

THE DAWNING light of the nineteenth century in Germany shone on a feudal land, a land impoverished by the wars of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and 200 years behind the rest of civilised Europe. Three-quarters of the population were agrarian. The guilds were still the dominant social institutions, but they were in rapid decline, as can be seen from the contradictory fact that there were more masters than men. The authorities fixed the hours and wages of the workers, who were given no opportunity to claim or protest, and who, in consequence, abandoned both guilds and workshops. For various reasons the manufacturing industry was in a state of impoverishment and decay.

The most highly developed industry in Germany at the time was found within the borders of Saxony, where, between 1806 and 1812, the number of cotton looms increased from 13,200 to 250,000. Of these, 58 per cent. were worked by hydraulic power, 29 per cent. by animal traction, and 13 per cent. by hand.

In the political field Germany, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, was a federation of 296 territorial and ecclesiastic principalities, and fifty-one free cities. All were under the sway of the Hapsburg dynasty, but each prince ruled over his dominions like an absolute monarch. It is scarcely necessary to say that liberty, in that hard political climate, was no more than a fine but unattainable ideal. Even foreigners—muscular ones—were bought and used as mercenaries. In the cities the patriciate ruled imperiously. The families with the greatest economic power administered the public wealth, and divided the bureaucratic posts among themselves.

As was inevitable, the French Revolution had driven a deep cleft into the German feudal system, but not, to be exact, until Napoleon had passed on through the North the torch which he had snatched from the hands of the bourgeoisie. The Paris events of 1789 had scarcely any immediate repercussions in Germany. Prussia appeared immovable, secure, a serf régime upheld by the pillars of autocracy. As early as 1789, however, some of the German nobility had gained a fairly exact idea of the meaning of the French Revolution. In August the French National Assembly abolished feudal rights, a decision which deeply affected the princes and landowners in Alsace. All had their land confiscated, with the promise of indemnity—a state of affairs by no means to

their liking, judging from the uproar which ensued, and which developed into the war of 1792–5. This war ended with the Peace of Basilea, which lined up Austria, Prussia and Great Britain against France. In February 1801 peace was signed with Austria in Lunéville. Revolution was in the air. At Basilea Prussia ceded to France the left bank of the Rhine; at Lunéville Austria also gave up territory on this bank. Germany therefore lost about 4 million inhabitants—that is to say, one-seventh of her population—and she also promised to indemnify the princes and landowners for the French confiscations. As forty-five of the German free cities were included in the territory annexed by France, Germany was left with only six, while the number of principalities was reduced to eighty-two, and in 1806 to thirty-nine. The German Emperor also promised, at Lunéville, to reform the Constitution, while Kaiser Franz's proclamation of himself as Emperor of Austria brought about the downfall of the German Empire.

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A first blow had been struck at the citadel of privilege existing in Germany at the beginning of the nineteenth century, a blow aimed by the subversive hand which had decreed the abolition of feudal rights in the National Assembly of Paris. The wars ending in a French victory, and the decision and policy of Napoleon Bonaparte, who was disseminating fresh ideas throughout Europe, represented further attacks on this citadel. The Napoleonic invasion of Germany ended with the subjugation of Prussia and the abolition of vassalage. Bonaparte raised the princes of Bavaria, Saxony and Würtemberg to the rank of monarchs, and he crowned his brother Jerome King of Westphalia. And in the western provinces of the Elbe, the heart of this kingdom, notable bourgeois reforms were introduced. Serfdom was abolished. In the Rhineland too, under French domination, the rights of the nobles disappeared. Feudal and ecclesiastic property passed into the hands of the peasants, who suddenly found themselves transformed into landowners. Political liberties were granted, and this naturally created an immense contrast between the North, still sunk in economical and political slavery, and the dynamic South. Such a contradictory state of affairs could not last, however. In 1807 the King of Prussia, by an edict of October 8th, modified State and juridical administration and political organisation. Forced on by circumstances, he went even farther: he promised industrial liberty, and freedom for the peasants. The outworn feudal state was dealt a mortal wound. The sword of Napoleon had pierced it to the heart.

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All revolutions, not excepting the Russian, have been closely

followed by some kind of reaction. This reaction, or rectification of revolutionary measures, is reflected in the German events of the period. The law was disregarded—if not as far as the abolition of feudal rights was concerned, at least as regards the distribution of land. The landowners were stronger than the King, and the edicts of 1807 and 1810, both of an especially progressive nature, were modified by a regulating decree of 1811. Later, in 1816, peasants were deprived of all possessions not entered in the land register. The Junkers had checked the revolutionary tendency, and were even reversing it. In spite of the conservative nature of the decree of 1811, it was hoped that 161,000 peasants would be given land, but in fact only 46,000 fresh proprietors were created, and 11,500 labourers were ejected from land which was theirs by right. The counter-revolution culminated in 1821 with the appropriation of communal property by the landowning oligarchy.

Between 1810 and 1815 events of tremendous importance took place in the social and juridical life of the nation. One was the granting of industrial liberty in Prussia, an expedient forced on the Prussian State by its deplorable economic situation, and which greatly increased the Government revenue. The professions were divided into six classes; factories, businesses and workshops had to provide themselves with the necessary licences, which involved the industrialists in considerable expenditure. In 1812, equal political, religious and economic rights were conceded to Jews and Catholics. The third event, of greater historical importance than the others, was a consequence of Napoleon's defeat in Russia. The reactionary purpose, uniting the European States in a war to overthrow Bonaparte, was considerably weakened by the attitude which the German monarchs were obliged to adopt towards the people, of whose assistance they stood in dire need. Perhaps for the first time in the history of Germany, her kings realised the existence of the masses.

The situation required careful handling. Promises had to be made, clever manœuvres carried out. But promises on the lips of an absolute monarch bring with them certain risks. They imply consecration, or recognition, of popular rights. And in such matters recognition has always been the first step to concession. In order to stir up the whole nation to fight the broken armies of Bonaparte, the King of Prussia had to be generous with his subjects. In March 1813 he addressed himself to the people and the Army in a political proclamation calling on them to take part in the holy war in which Germany had staked her all. The King offered the people, after victory, a splendid prize: liberty and the right to intervene, by means of the franchise, in public affairs.

But as was perhaps only natural, when victory came it brought the King an attack of that amnesia from which Royal minds have so often and so conveniently suffered; and no more was said of liberty, or Constitutions, or suffrage rights.

Nevertheless, the promises of the King of Prussia represented a bold step forward. The men returning from the war felt that they had been cheated. The youthful intelligentsia opened fire on the Tartuffism of the ruling classes. They raised the banner of Liberalism, and called for the unity of Germany, a cry later to be taken up by the proletariat. Meanwhile, the campaign awakened the lethargic conscience of the nation; student associations were founded, scholars and professors fraternised. The slogan "One Germany, united and free" was soon adopted in intellectual circles. The bourgeoisie were quick to grasp the benefits which the situation offered, and Bavaria, Baden and Würtemberg drew up their respective Constitutions, while the Southern Press supported the demands of the Liberal majority in Bavaria and Baden for greater middle-class rights. The exact meaning of the movement did not escape Metternich's keen intelligence, however, and in the meantime he was evolving a plan for police repression. The reactionaries made the assassination, in March 1819, of the Russian Counsellor and spy, Kotzebue, with which the student Sand was charged, and the persecution of the Jews in certain cities, a pretext to crush the budding flower of Liberalism. In August of the same year Ministers of the large German States met in Karlsbad, and from this inquisitorial Congress resulted the famous "Karlsbad Agreements", a violent and fiery crusade against mind and spirit, which destroyed all revolutionary activity. Reaction, once more having gained the whip hand, was implacable, and the exiled and persecuted Germans were forced to take refuge in Switzerland and other countries.

For ten years a solemn silence reigned over Germany. At home a victorious oligarchy kept the people heavily chained, and abroad various groups of revolutionary intellectuals conspired without any immediate success. But once more it was France who was to arouse the German people. In 1830 the middle class and peasants awakened from their lethargy when the French bourgeoisie placed Louis Philippe on the throne to defend their interests, and the revolutionary elements of society regained strength. The Paris revolution of July was a clarion rending the air from the Rhine to Pomerania. Once again blood was to flow. . . .

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In the political and social spheres, the years 1830 and 1831 were characterised by an accentuation of the class struggle. In those German States which were without a Constitution, or in others,

like Prussia, where reforms had been excessively timid, there were uprisings and mutinies. The Hessian peasants revolted. In Brunswick a group of revolutionaries stoned the Duke Charles on his return from a theatre, forcing him to flee and setting fire to his palace. Contrary to what might be supposed, however, these incidents were successful. The Duke's brother William was at the head of the Government, and to appease the malcontents, he drew up a Constitution. In Cassel the people revolted, and Prince William promised to alter the juridical structure of the State. On January 5th, 1831, negotiations were broken off, but the Prince had to flee from an enraged crowd. The insurrection spread to other "countries". The impatient middle classes attacked the barriers which were standing in the path to liberty, and after a ten years' silence the proletariat made its voice heard. The maltreatment of an apprentice by a Government official resulted in a tempestuous assault on the author of this injustice; the police station was attacked and various public buildings were destroyed. It should be noted that in these protests students played an important part. In Dresden, Saxony-Altenburg and other cities there were considerable disturbances.

This stage of the revolutionary movement, directed by the German middle classes, was not only influenced by events in Paris. During that time, little by little, the surviving institutions of other countries were being levelled. Dutch domination of Belgium, the struggle for freedom in Poland, and the insurrection in Central Italy, upheld the will to fight in German progressive circles. The disturbances culminated with a demonstration organised by the Bavarian Liberal Press in the spring of 1832, when, at the foot of the ruined castle of Hambach, a spot chosen perhaps for its symbolic significance, 30,000 men met together. Reaction used this meeting as a pretext to invoke, with greater severity than before, the "Karlsbad Agreement", and once more liberty was overthrown. Everyone suspected of liberalism was subjected to brutal repression, and nothing remained of the fire of revolution, kindled by the Paris incidents, but a few dying embers.

The French Revolution exercised a considerable influence on Germany. For a long time the political disturbances in France had had their repercussions in the Teutonic States, and the German revolutionaries of 1830 even planned institutions on the French model. In Leipzig, for instance, the insurgents demanded the creation of a Civil Guard such as that formed in France in 1813. This Guard was created, and in fact served as a refuge for many students, who saw in the new police organisation an instrument with which to attack persecution, and who were thus converted into defenders of law and order.

Among those who disseminated most openly and courageously the postulates of the French Revolution through Germany was Georges Büchner, a student of a generous and ardent temperament. Büchner founded the Society for the Rights of Man in Giessen, an organisation which developed in the pathetically clandestine conditions of those days. Büchner edited a Republican paper in Hessen, in which he championed the cause of the proletariat, and whose romantic slogan was "Peace to the Cottages! War on the Palaces!" The Society for the Rights of Man was suppressed by the police; the paper disappeared and its sponsors fled to France and Switzerland. Paris welcomed the German revolutionaries, then expelled them. Secret societies were founded. The hospitable Switzerland opened her doors to the exiles, and periodicals edited by the German refugees were circulated and smuggled over the frontier. The police were constantly on the watch and ready to punish offenders—but to what purpose? Romanticism had given a fresh impetus to the struggle, and in Paris the first performance of Victor Hugo's *Hernani* was being shown. Working-class conspirators intermingled with bourgeois revolutionaries, and the proletariat and bourgeoisie were with one voice demanding Liberty, the Constitution, and franchise rights.

CHAPTER TWO

THE BEGINNINGS OF GERMAN SOCIALISM

AMONG THE German political immigrants carrying on clandestine activities in Paris, Berne and London, were many great fighters and trained leaders. One of these was the tailor Weitling. Weitling was born in Magdeburg of working-class parents, and in his early years misfortune dogged his footsteps with unusual persistence. A man of extreme sensibilities, he welcomed wholeheartedly the current of Socialist opinion which was then flowing over from France. In Paris he met the champions of "Utopian" Socialism—Saint-Simon, Fourier, Cabet—and in this school he was educated. From Paris he went to Switzerland, where he preached Socialism with fanatical enthusiasm. In Geneva he founded a periodical for German youth, which appeared, under the name of *The Young Generation*, in Berne, Vevey, Langenthal or Zurich, as and where police vigilance could be avoided, and in which he preached the equality of rights of the Fourth Estate. Many Swiss and German members of the proletariat joined his movement. In the chief cities of Switzerland there were organisations consisting generally of the better-paid workers.

Under Weitling "Utopian" Socialism began to spread in Germany. The General Staff of this intelligent Socialist consisted of men of considerable merit, revolutionaries living continuously in exile or prison. Augustus Becker, Sebastian Seiler and Albrecht, "the Prophet", were all Weitling's faithful disciples. Each one of them could write well and was a good public speaker. "The Prophet" wrote an interesting series of pamphlets on the idea of Communism as it was understood in those days. Becker had a facile and proselytising pen. After 1840 he published various works, in which he voiced the anxieties of the Communist group, and with his *Popular Philosophy of Today* and *What Do the Communists Want?*—his two best-known essays—he gained the ascendant among the revolutionaries. Becker was also a correspondent of the *Rheinische Zeitung*, a paper edited by Marx, and of the *Vorwärts*, published in Paris by a group of German comrades.

Under the stress of circumstances, Weitling left Geneva and settled in Zurich. It should be noted that the politico-administrative machinery of Switzerland made it possible for revolutionaries to pass from one canton to another with a certain guarantee of personal safety. In June 1843, however, the police arrested him in Zurich, and seized all the copies of his essay *The Gospel of the Poor Fishermen*, which had just come from the press. All the members of his organisation who were foreigners or who did not belong to the canton were expelled from Zurich, and Weitling himself was condemned to six months' imprisonment. When the sentence had been served, the police handed him over at the frontier to the German authorities, where, after a brief stay in Prussia, he left for Hamburg. From there he went to London, and in January 1871 he died in New York.

The Swiss Grand Council passed a special law against the Communists, and German workers were expelled *en masse*. *The Young Generation* died a sudden death, and Communist propaganda in Switzerland disappeared almost entirely.

In the history of the German Socialist movement Weitling deserves a place in the front rank. He introduced "Utopian" Socialism into Germany at a time when the proletariat and bourgeoisie were united, beneath the banner of liberal demands, in a kind of confused intermingling of classes. He made personal contributions of undoubted value to the theories of the French Utopians. In his theoretical works, of which *The Guarantee of Harmony and Liberty* and *The World as it Is and as it Ought to Be* are the best examples, the tremendous influence of these men is seen perhaps most clearly. There are, however, in Weitling obvious signs of "scientific" Socialism, and his Socialism is therefore part "Utopian" and part "scientific". More than Owen or Fourier,

Weitling resembles Tchernychevski, a Russian who was also connected with the French Utopians of the first half of the nineteenth century. As in Tchernychevski, we see in Weitling a suggestion of dialectic materialism which brings him near to Karl Marx. In fact he figures in the annals of history as the first German theorist of Communism.

What was the situation of the German proletarian classes when Marx became interested in the social struggle? What phase of development had German industrial progress reached?

In the 1830–40 decade the German industrial revolution took place. Almost insensibly, while the oligarchy was repressing the Republican movement, German economy was being transformed in such a way as to undermine the ruling classes. During those ten years modern industry arrived in Germany, and found itself faced with splendid prospects. The steam engine freed industry from the tyrannical necessity of remaining in certain specific districts, and gave a great impetus to manufacture. On the other hand, the abolition in 1818 of the Customs barriers in Prussia facilitated economic progress and brought the other German States into the Prussian Customs Union. On January 1st, 1834, the machinery of the Union, affecting some 30 million inhabitants, began to function—an important milestone on the road to Empire. It should be noted, in passing, that in the interval science had built strong foundations for industry. The exact and natural sciences, which were developing remarkably, aided the newly-born technique. Amazing inventions and discoveries, such as electrodynamics, telegraphy, photography, aniline, all favoured industrial development. In 1847 the Rhineland coke-ovens were installed, and twelve years earlier the first railway, from Nüremberg to Fürth, had been constructed. In 1839 there was a line from Leipzig to Dresden, while the Prussian Railway Act of 1838 facilitated and speeded up the formation of Companies. It was not only railways that were built, however; there was also considerable construction of roads and canals during this period.

The development of communications opened up wide horizons for the industrial revolution. The economic transformation of Germany was effected by a system of double entry. Customs barriers were destroyed, and at the same time geographical obstacles were overthrown and distances consequently shortened. Some regions, such as the Rhineland and Westphalia, rich in minerals and raw materials, especially coal, were almost untapped owing to the lack of methods of exploitation. In the districts of Aachen, Cologne and Dusseldorf nearly every branch

of industry was to be found. In those regions were large masses of workers—an exceptional situation in Germany at that time—who were employed in the cotton, silk, dye and lead industries, in the mines, arms factories, in metallurgy, iron foundries, printing-works, etc., etc.

While Germany was developing her home industries, she was at the same time spreading her commercial net over all the Continents, gaining both markets and a reputation for her products. As always happens in such circumstances, industry absorbed the agricultural workers. Commercial and industrial prosperity, however, necessitated an accumulation of capital, and in the towns the old ruling classes were swept to one side by the tide of the historical process. "Make way there for the bourgeoisie!" was the cry. This situation, of course, accentuated the class struggle, and a dividing line was drawn openly and unmistakably between the proletariat and the middle classes.

These middle classes, who, with youthful audacity, were taking their places in the government of the State, began to prosper. On the other hand, there was no protection for the proletariat—no social laws, wage tariffs or regulation of hours. Female and child labour was offered unstintingly to a greedy capitalism—a cheap and abundant source of energy, and as such preferred by the bourgeoisie. The inhuman treatment of women and children in factories and workshops had a grievous effect on the physique of the population. Adults worked from fourteen to sixteen hours a day; children were sent into factories at six years old. In the textile and light industries working conditions were even worse.

The first measures giving protection to the workers were not passed until 1839. This reform had been demanded three years before in a report presented to Frederick William III by a certain Lieutenant-General Von Horn, who complained of not being able to raise the annual contingent of troops in the Rhineland because the exploitation of child workers resulted in such poor adult physique. The Act consisted of ten articles, and prohibited the employment of children under nine in mines and factories, and restricted the working hours of those under sixteen to ten a day. It need hardly be said, however, that owing to the lack of effective working organisations it was never enforced. The English industrial inferno, denounced by Engels in 1846, could scarcely have been more terrible than that of nineteenth-century German capitalism.

The theory of the Liberal economists who, in order to combat the police-State, like Adam Smith in England, submitted that it was not the function of the State to meddle with economic problems, was enjoying great popularity. The State must confine itself

to protecting property. In this way the greedy and brutal bourgeoisie reacted against the measures designed to humanise labour. Taking advantage of the teaching of the Manchester School, the industrial middle classes won the battle against the State. The "absolute freedom" of the physiocrats was merely absolute freedom to exploit the proletariat; the State, in fact, had to be content with the rôle of protector of private property.

While capitalist economy developed and gained strength, the State became less and less able to control it. By an Act of May 16th, 1853, inspectors were appointed to watch over the interests of the workers in the regions of Aachen, Dusseldorf and Arnsberg. These inspections ceased, however, in 1862, in spite of the fact that their expenses continued to figure in the State budget long after that year.

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How did Karl Marx begin the struggle for the emancipation of the proletariat? Possibly his first combative writings were those which appeared in the *German Year Book*, edited by Ruge. It was not, however, till 1842 that Marx drew near to the masses, whom he addressed through the medium of the *Rheinische Zeitung*. Marx founded the *Rheinische Zeitung* as a Hegelian. Two friends of his, also Hegelians, laid down the lines of policy for the periodical, which entered the political arena to fight the ultramontane Government organ of the day, the *Kölnische Zeitung*. Marx wrote with a destructive pen. His tremendous talent, his exceptional culture, his sense of polemics, his clean and biting wit, are apparent in the very first article of the paper. It is not surprising therefore that less than a year after the launching of the *Rheinische Zeitung*, the two young Hegelians at the helm of this ship of journalism should ask Marx to become its captain. This moment, if not a decisive one, was of great importance in Marx's life. The next day the *Rheinische Zeitung* became a Socialist newspaper. The German proletariat were no longer alone; a great intellectual had embraced their cause.

Marx was a clever, combative and well-informed journalist. He did not choose themes beyond the comprehension of his readers; indeed his one anxiety, when he wrote for the Press, was that the proletariat should understand him. Later he was to admit this preoccupation in the prologue to the first French edition of *Capital*. Marx had an excellent conception of the functions of a Socialist newspaper, and from the moment that he became its director, the *Rheinische Zeitung* assumed an attractive form. For the Liberals it was a stronghold. The masses suffocating in the Rhineland factories would read the impassioned words of Marx, who launched daily attacks on the ruling classes. Every

event of topical importance was seized on by the journalist philosopher, and nothing in the class struggle passed without his comment. The battery fire of the *Rheinische Zeitung* was directed against private property; against the miserable conditions of the Mosela peasants; against Government cruelty, bourgeois vices, the capitalists' fanatical worship of the golden calf. Marx laughed at the bourgeois economist. He attacked the sacred conception of property. He incited rebellion. A sensation was created in Germany by his clear vision and his quiet courage.

The Government made ready to destroy the *Rheinische Zeitung*. It was decimated by the censorship. Yet, in spite of all, the paper did not disappear; on the contrary, it gained fresh readers daily. In the face of this, the Council of Ministers presided over by the King decided, on January 21st, 1843, that it should be banned. The shareholders quarrelled among themselves; they pleaded that their interests should not be prejudiced; doubtless they invoked the doctrine of the physiocrats: "*Le monde va de lui-même. Laissez faire. . . .*" Out of consideration for the shareholders, the Government allowed publication to continue to the end of March, though, needless to say, under a double censorship. But this muzzling process brought Marx to the verge of despair, and he finally abandoned the paper. The Socialist philosopher then left for Paris, a city which was to play an important part in his development. It was there that he met Proudhon, Leroux and, it is to be supposed, all the theorists of French Socialism.

It is not my purpose here to deal with Marx's activities abroad, activities which were so multiform, so painful and so effective. Marx is universal. And as far as the object of this book is concerned, I am only interested in following the founder of "scientific" Socialism in his path through Germany.

When Marx left his country as a political exile for the first time, Socialism was already firmly rooted in his mind; in fact he had become a Socialist on the *Rheinische Zeitung*. In this paper he dealt first with the problems of popular economy. Then proletarian questions began to claim his eager interest. The paper was like a huge window opening on to the new world of economics, a window from which Marx could contemplate the various divisions of society, and could launch his attacks on capitalism.

Marx's revolutionary activities in Germany were brief and interrupted. By the time of his departure for Paris in 1843 he had embraced the cause of the international proletariat, and studied in consequence the general problems of economics and the class struggle. His pen was never idle. He organised international meetings. The world was his parish. This does not mean, however, that he had forgotten Germany; for Marx his native country

was an important part of the international economy. Only by envisaging the whole with his clear-sighted intelligence, was he able to undertake the tremendous task of building up scientific Socialism, but the co-author of the "Communist Manifesto" did not lose sight of German events, and he was in continual touch with his Socialist compatriots, for whom he acted as a constant guide and counsellor.

It is probably true to say that on only two subsequent occasions did Karl Marx take part in the direct struggle against German reaction. After the triumph of the 1848 revolution—in Vienna on March 13th and in Berlin on the 18th—Marx and Engels left Paris for Cologne in order to give their support to the revolutionaries. A group of Communists and democrats in that city were proposing to publish a newspaper, and Marx and Engels, who were asked to undertake the work, laid down as a condition that they should be responsible for its policy. And on June 1st, 1848, the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* first saw the light of day. Beneath the title appeared the highly subversive words, "Organ of Democracy". The "Communist Manifesto", the ink of its latest editions scarcely dry, was being passed from hand to hand, and its spirit descended on the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*. In those moments of revolutionary pressure, when the fight against the monarchy was fiercer than at any previous time, the paper edited by Marx and Engels shed light in dark places. Marx assaulted the insecure position of the bourgeoisie. He supported the National Assembly against the throne, declaring the former sovereign and indissoluble, since its mandate had been received not from the Crown but from the people, who were victorious in the revolution. There were moments when not only the Prussian National Assembly but also the National Assembly which met in Frankfurt was threatened with dissolution by the monarchy. The reaction of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* was immediate. In heavy type Marx wrote: "People, arise! There is no course but revolution."

Marx's political thought concerning foreign policy and that of nationalities is reflected in the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*. He defended the independence of nationalities—of the Italians, the Magyars and the Poles—and he also joined battle with the landlords. By a decree of December 1848 the Prussian Government had attempted to adjust the relations between the peasants and the landed proprietors in the province of Silesia, and without delay Marx entered the lists in defence of the despoiled peasants. On this subject one of the editors, Wilhelm Wolff, wrote eight incisive and well-documented articles under the title of "The Thousand Million Silesians", stating that the Junkers had cheated the peasants of 1,000,000,000 talers. This series of violent revolution-

ary articles both enhanced the prestige of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* and exhausted the patience of the shareholders, who were not Communists, but small bourgeoisie, and whose limited mentality was deeply affected by the bold and noisy campaigns of the "Organ of Democracy".

Something of a very curious nature now occurred. The *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* had been founded with a very small capital. The timid and by no means revolutionary shareholders voiced their disagreement with the policy of the paper after the appearance of the first number, and half of them dissociated themselves from the enterprise without waiting for the second issue. And when the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* glorified the French workers who had taken part in the June disturbances in Paris, the other half also deserted, and bankruptcy was inevitable. Marx and Engels, however, faced their tremendous difficulties with heroism. In the meantime the first clouds of the counter-revolution had begun to gather on the horizon, and the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* was being attacked on all sides. Barricades in Cologne. Suspension of the "Organ of Democracy". Further publication. Court proceedings and sentences. An increase in the number of subscribers from 5,000 to 6,000. But the clouds of the counter-revolution were by now overhead. In May 1849 the counter-revolutionary offensive began, and the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* died a glorious death.

In order to be able to attack the persecuting policy of the Prussian Government, Marx had in 1845 given up his Prussian nationality. He was therefore *staatenlos*—stateless. The Cologne authorities decreed his exile on May 16th, 1849, and the other editors of the newspaper suffered a similar fate. Marx himself was told that he must leave the Rhineland within twenty-four hours.

After the failure of the journalistic enterprise, Marx was poorer than at any time in his life. The spectre of hunger raised itself on the hearth of the Socialist fighter; everything that he possessed had gone to pay the debts of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, and nothing remained but his wife's silver, which he soon sold to a second-hand shop in Frankfurt, in order to keep the wolf from the door for a few days.

From Frankfurt-am-Main Marx and Engels went to Baden, where the barricades had been raised and the people were facing the counter-revolution bravely. On their return, however, they were arrested by Hessian troops, who suspected them of having participated in the rising, and were taken back to Frankfurt, where, their "innocence" proved, they were placed at liberty. Marx set off again for Paris, and Engels returned to Kaiserslautern.

In August 1849, however, Marx decided to change his place of residence, and in a letter to Engels he said: "I am going to London. Here in France the authorities never leave one in peace." The French wanted in fact to keep him in the Morbihan Department—but this would have been to cage the eagle.

Marx's absences from Germany were of long duration. As I have already said, he followed in detail the German working-class and Socialist movement, writing periodically to his comrades on the other side of the Rhine. Nothing escaped him. In his letters, which are always full of interest, he theorises, reprimands, makes ironical comments. Exiled Germans helped him as far as was in their power; only Engels, however, was in a position to prevent Marx and his family from starving, and sometimes, of course, even Engels failed him. And then the Marx family starved.

It is hardly necessary to say that Marx had a remarkable influence on the progress of the German working-class movement. It was seldom, however, that he intervened in German struggles. As far as I know, from the time of his first exile in 1843, Marx was in Germany on only two occasions. One has already been mentioned. The other was in 1861. In 1860 Ferdinand Lassalle conceived the idea of founding in Berlin a great democratic newspaper with the collaboration of Marx and Engels. Friedrich Wilhelm IV died on January 2nd, 1861; the new King declared an amnesty, and Lassalle then considered the possibility of Marx's returning to Germany. Marx did in fact return, and was Lassalle's guest for the first twelve days of April, but he declined the offer of managing the paper which the young Lassalle proposed to edit. At that time Marx was forty-three, and Lassalle under forty. It is interesting to note that when the latter made the offer he announced that Marx and Engels should together have one vote. "Otherwise", he said, "I should always be in the minority." A Liberal Ministry under Schwerin was then guiding the destinies of Prussia, and the Ministry refused, in November 1861, to allow Marx to become renaturalised.

As the reader will see, Marx's stay in Germany at this time was a prolonged one. Nevertheless he did not intervene in the political struggle, doubtless on account of theoretical work. Six years afterwards the first volume of *Das Kapital* appeared. It is to be supposed that Marx gave up these months in Germany to meditation and writing, and this would explain his refusal to manage Lassalle's periodical.

Ferdinand Lassalle, however, belongs to the post-1848 period.

So long as the bourgeoisie fought in the opposition, they were on the side of the proletariat, both with the same objective in view, and Socialism was unable to pass out of the infant stage.

The Liberals preached revolution, and the working classes followed them. Socialism could only pave a way for itself among the proletariat when the bourgeoisie had achieved at least a certain measure of power.

CHAPTER THREE

THE REVOLUTION OF 1848

THE YEAR 1848 is the year of the "Communist Manifesto", of the downfall of the Orleans dynasty in France, the overthrow of the Metternich régime in Austria, and the March revolution in Germany. It was a year of barricades and class struggles. The bourgeoisie, supported by the workers, continued their offensive against the absolute monarchy. Thrones tottered in the small States as well as in the Central ones. The absolutist governments of Baden, Würtemberg, Bavaria, Brunswick, Hesse, Saxony, Thuringia, Hanover, Nassau, were all overthrown. Liberal Ministries were formed. But Prussia, ruled by Friedrich Wilhelm IV since 1840, was proof against middle-class assaults. The King felt, like his father, that the Constitution was a hindrance. He would not so much as discuss the question of liberty—"Between God and the nation there should be nothing in writing." Nevertheless the middle classes insisted on their rights.

Economic development made liberal laws necessary. The previous year had witnessed the action of economic development on the political structure of society, and the Government was faced with fresh problems which necessitated the convening of a National Assembly; loans, the building of the Eastern railway, the introduction of a tax on incomes, were all questions too delicate to be dealt with safely without consulting the people. The monarchy needed the collaboration of all the social classes, although the ruling class meant to ensure that the intervention of the opposition should be more hypothetical than real. Parliament therefore remained in session only as long as suited the King's convenience, and was then dissolved. But the negotiations, brief as they were, aroused the people. Protests increased. Demands were made on every hand for freedom of association, religion and the Press, and a Constitution for the Reich.

In the years preceding 1848 much inflammable material had been piled up beneath the thrones of the German kings. Communist activity increased in proportion to the people's misery, and in 1844 there was a rising of Silesian weavers, a movement which was brutally repressed by the Army. Heine's poem, "The Weavers", and other magnificent verses by the people's poet Freiligrath, were written at that time. The economic crisis, pre-

cipitated by a bad harvest in 1847, stirred up revolutionary feeling throughout the country, but the German monarchs, endowed with no very great sagacity, were unable to foresee the storm ahead, or, if they foresaw it, they certainly did nothing to avoid it. On March 1st, 1848, the federation of princes and kings warned the States to prepare for any contingency. The watchword was, needless to say, "Order and the security of private property!" The proletariat were sunk in the depths of poverty, but the State, indifferent to their plight, did nothing to relieve their misery, nor probably could it have done anything without undergoing a complete transformation. In some parts of Germany collections were made for the poor, with scant results. The one anxiety of the Prussian Government, in the meantime, was, apparently, that its soldiers should keep their equipment well polished. Alone among the Municipal authorities those of Berlin rose to the occasion, and hastily created a Labour Exchange, doubtless the first to exist in Germany. Seven thousand unemployed immediately registered, but not one of them was given any work, and, tired of waiting, the proletariat set about finding a solution of the terrible problem for themselves. The cause of the workers was the cause of the bourgeoisie. Huge open-air meetings were held, in which the claims of the middle classes were joined to demands for social reform, such as guarantees for the workers and the creation of a Ministry of Labour.

The King made ready to quench the flame of popular protest which was sweeping over the country. Between March 13th and 16th Government forces attacked defenceless groups of demonstrators with excessive brutality, and as a result, the middle classes took great care to keep away from the workers, closing their doors to those who sought refuge from the soldiers' bayonets. But they changed their attitude when Army sabres also slashed the backs of "peaceful citizens", and then agreed that rebellion against the absolute monarchy was a historic duty. Hitherto the stimulus necessary in all revolutionary situations had been lacking, but this suddenly made itself felt. News came from Austria that the powerful Metternich had been overthrown.

The King of Prussia had a moment of lucidity, and recalled Parliament on April 2nd. But it was too late; the people no longer believed in the King's promises. Those interested in the safeguarding of law and order organised a peaceful demonstration outside the palace on March 18th to request the King to withdraw his troops, to organise a Civil Guard, to guarantee liberty of the Press and to convoke a Constituent Parliament. The Civic Guard was not to be formed with the object of fighting the Army, but was to be a voluntary organisation for the maintenance of law and

order. It would seem that the middle classes were already disturbed at the revolutionary spirit of the workers. The King granted the two last petitions, but refused the others, a refusal which was greeted with shouts and hisses from the crowd. Workers and bourgeoisie swarmed round the palace—the former, naturally, in predominance—loudly demanding that the military should be withdrawn. But all in vain; a company of infantry marched out of the palace, followed shortly afterwards by a squadron of dragoons. The square was to be "cleaned up". Two shots fired by the infantry gave the battle signal, and for thirteen hours a hand-to-hand battle was waged between the people and the troops. Fourteen thousand soldiers with thirty-six cannon fought against a mass of defenceless men, and when at mid-day on March 19th the troops retired, 183 workers were found lying dead on the stones of the palace yard.

The revolutionaries who had been fighting behind the barricades bore the victims to one of the courts of the palace, and forced the King to appear before them with his head uncovered. On March 21st the crowd carried the bodies through the main streets of Berlin, a procession headed by the King, and followed by the ministers and princes, and all the Berlin citizenry. One of their number carried a flag of black, red and gold, colours which seventy years later were to consecrate the Constitution of Weimar.

The King announced that he was determined to safeguard German unity and liberty, and that his one desire was to be at the head of a constitutional Germany.

The proletariat shed their blood during those March days, but it was the middle classes who carried off the booty. On March 29th the leaders of the Rhineland bourgeoisie, Camphausen and Hansemann, formed a Ministry.

An Act of April 8th conceded general, secret and indirect suffrage for an Assembly which was to be convened, and whose task was to draw up a Constitution in agreement with the Crown.

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The middle classes had betrayed the workers, thus fulfilling what was also their historic mission. At the same time they destroyed the worst characteristics of absolute monarchy. The Government set aside 15 million talers for equipping the Army, and 25 millions more for commerce and industry, on the pretext of lessening unemployment. And it so happened that Camphausen and Hansemann asked for this money from a Parliament which they had fought a year previously because of what they considered its factious character. Another sign of defeat of the old ruling classes was the capitulation, in the early days of March, of the federation of princes and nobles, and their recognition of the

black, red and gold flag—the same flag which they had hitherto outraged, and for which thousands of German citizens had given their lives.

The German revolution of March is an important milestone in the history of the Reich. It swept away the last vestiges of feudalism; the guild system was definitely at an end and a new epoch was beginning.

Neither the middle classes nor the workers, however, could count on any independent political organisations of their own. A historic conflict was continually being waged between the various categories of workmen; the factory workers and those who suffered exploitation in workshops refused to take part in any common action. Nothing can give a better idea of the mentality and position of the proletariat than the petitions presented to the National Assembly at Frankfurt, wherein the weavers demanded that machines should be abolished, or at any rate taxed heavily enough to protect hand labour. For the same reason they also demanded high duties on machinery, and the restriction of working-hours to ten a day.

Communist or Socialist ideas, including those of "Utopian" Socialism, had not yet penetrated German working-class circles. No doubt the workers had heard some talk of Communism, but as a general rule they were, both before and after the March revolution, reluctant to encourage Socialist propaganda. When Weitling arrived in Berlin in July 1848 he was not given the welcome from the workers which he deserved, and his pamphlet *Der Urwahler*, although it dealt with an urgent and topical theme, was not a success. Shortly after this, however, thanks to the liberty of the Press, Socialist ideas began to be propagated, chiefly through the medium of Marx and Engels in the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*. And a select group of Socialists was formed which was to be of valuable assistance to the cause.

A member of this ruling minority was one Stephan Born, for whom Karl Marx entertained a great liking. A fine speaker, and a collaborator in the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, Born had worked in a variety of professions, beginning with printing and ending with journalism. He was with Marx in London, and had travelled all through Central Europe for the League of Communists. In the spring of 1849 he led the Leipzig proletariat to the barricades because the King of Saxony had broken his promise to recognise the Constitution of Frankfurt. In this rising 300 revolutionaries were killed.

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Throughout the course of history, revolution and counter-revolution have followed close upon each other in rapid succession.

The nineteenth century, the century of liberty, is characterised, in the political field, by a clashing of forces in which freedom is alternately vanquished and victorious. This phenomenon, which was faithfully reproduced in France, Germany and Spain, is due, no doubt, to a balancing of tendencies. The revolution of 1848 in Germany was followed by a counter-revolution, which culminated in 1854 with the violent dissolution of all workers' organisations. Some had been formed in the heat of the class struggle, and as a result of the propaganda of Marx and Engels. The most important of all the proletarian groups was the "Workers' Brotherhood", founded by Born, which published a periodical, *Das Volk*, on the lines of the "Communist Manifesto", and whose membership was 10,000—a considerable figure for such an association in those days. In the provinces there appeared other weekly papers edited by workers, which also gave encouragement to the organisation.

The Constituent Congress of the "Workers' Brotherhood" was formed in August 1848—the first workers' Congress to meet in Germany. The demands drawn up by the Assembly gave proof of considerable common sense. In the social field they comprised a ten-hour day, prohibition of the employment of children under fourteen, repeal of the anti-workers' laws, abolition of indirect taxes, the creation of a progressive tax on the accumulation of capital, nomination of factory and workshop delegates, compulsory and free education for children over five, without distinction of class, and other minimum and well-considered claims. In the political sphere they consisted of general franchise, for the Reich as well as for the Landtages and Municipalities; reduction of military service to one year; abolition of entail; and division of the large undeveloped estates.

The historical importance of this Congress lies in the fact that for the first time it grouped together a large number of German workers as an independent class. It bore within itself the seeds of the larger federations which were to come. And during the same period the first Trades Unions were formed. In Berlin, for instance, the printers founded a Union. And in April 1848 they declared a successful strike which resulted in a wage increase of 25 per cent. Soon afterwards, in June, a National Federation of Printers was formed, with headquarters in Frankfurt-am-Main, and a periodical, entitled *Gutenberg*, which was published in Berlin.

The counter-revolution destroyed everything which the workers had so splendidly achieved. The Socialists, who at the time were known as Communists, were persecuted with a crusading zeal. In Cologne there was a famous trial of eleven members of the Marxist League, a League which was dissolved, at Marx's suggestion, a

few days before the end of the proceedings. Communist propaganda, begun in 1836, ended in 1853, and with no opportunity for proselytising, the champions of the working classes took refuge in silence. Like Buddha, each retired to his mountain to meditate on the establishment of social justice.

CHAPTER FOUR

FERDINAND LASSALLE AND BISMARCK

IT MAY be said that until 1860 there was no organised working-class movement in Germany. The "Workers' Brotherhood" and other incipient groups can only be considered as experiments, or important historical precedents, the foundations on which subsequent working-class institutions were to be built. In any case, the lack of class-consciousness among the working masses and the opposition of the bourgeoisie to any proletarian development were, as we have seen, obstacles to the formation of Trades Unions and workers' organisations. At this stage of the nineteenth century the German middle classes had declared open war on the workers. It was the golden age of Teutonic capitalism. Already it had its political parties: the Liberal Party, representing the great industrial bourgeoisie; the Conservative Party, political incarnation of the landed bourgeoisie; and the Progressive Party, representing the middle classes and the *petit bourgeois*. Besides these there was at the Centre the Catholic Party, an amalgam of various bourgeois elements.

The time was therefore ripe for the creation of a powerful proletarian organisation. The *petit bourgeois* and the intellectuals, forming the Progressive Party, were disturbed at the activities of the cigar-maker Fritzche, the shoemaker Vahlteich and the turner Augustus Bebel, who, with others, were organising the proletariat as an autonomous class. The Progressive organ *Volksfreund* launched a campaign to divide the workers. An independent proletarian party meant the weakening of the Progressive group, which up to then, owing to the lack of working-class organisations, had been able to count on the adherence of large numbers of exploited workers. The Progressives, with their organisation the Nationalverein, were fighting at the time for a Constitution, and they feared that the projected Workers' Congress would divert, at least temporarily, the attention of the masses in other directions. In their struggles with the large industrial and landowning bourgeoisie, the liberal middle classes needed the support of the masses—hence their anger at the obstinate resolve of a group of militant Socialists to pursue other aims.

The highest intelligences among the workers all agreed that the time had come when the wage-earners must fight with their own weapons and from their own citadels. The historic necessity was stressed; the workers could not fulfil their revolutionary mission if they did not intervene in politics as an independent, disciplined and united class.

The German proletariat and Socialist movement, which began to gain momentum about 1860, and which subsequently was to give impetus to Social-democratic policy, was to a large extent the work of Ferdinand Lassalle. Lassalle was a great politician. Cultured, impassioned and courageous, a born leader, with an amazing capacity for work, he had all the qualities of a fighter. But, like all men of romantic temperament, he was extremely impressionable, and although gifted with a fine intelligence, his heart was stronger than his head. Endowed with a full measure of Quixotism, he embraced the cause of the proletariat, which he defended at the same time as that of a woman, the Countess of Hatzfeld. In 1848 he was fully engaged in the trial of the Count of Hatzfeld for abandoning and disinheriting the Countess. But he still found time to spare from his task of defending the lady—who was later to become a militant Socialist—to take part in the revolutionary movement of Dusseldorf. Lassalle's intervention in the Hatzfeld trial gives evidence of a romantic disposition in no way concerned with the financial advantages which the issue was to bring him. In order to defend the Countess, he studied law, and the case was heard before thirty-six tribunals. He was successful, and a princely fortune passed into the hands of his patron, as a result of which he himself became assured of an annual legitimate income of 7,000 talers. Both the gesture, which involved a tremendous effort for a man ignorant of law, and the trial itself, which was crowded with incidents, were novelesque to a degree.

But Lassalle's life was throughout a romantic one. He gave a French form to his name during his stay in Paris, where he was in close touch with Heine, and where, it seems, the principles of Socialism first took root in his mind. In 1848 he met Marx, who became fond of Lassalle, but mistrusted him. It was soon obvious that neither ideologically nor tactically could they understand one another. Marx censured many of Lassalle's actions, but he admired him for his great abilities as a pamphleteer and perhaps, too, for his warm heart. Such a remarkable and quixotic life as Lassalle's was predestined to end as it did. On August 31st, 1864, he was mortally wounded in a duel, not far from Lake Léman, by a Junker, one von Rakowitz. After Lassalle's death Marx wrote to the Countess of Hartzfeld, "He has died young and in the full flush of triumph, like Achilles."

Mention will be made later of those harmful and inexplicable activities of Lassalle, activities which merited Marx's censure. It can be said, however, that in spite of all, his theoretical and political work is of great importance. His two principal works are: *The System of Acquired Rights*, and *The Philosophy of Heraclite*. Condemned to five months' imprisonment in January 1863, he drew up his own defence, a brilliant piece of writing, which was published under the title of *Science and the Workers*. His pamphlet *Might and Right* is an implacable diatribe against the Progressive Party, and his commentary on "The Communist Manifesto", *The Relation of the Present Historic Period to the Proletarian Idea*, also deserves mention. This pamphlet, which was given an enthusiastic welcome, sketched in outline a complete Socialist and workers' programme.

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The members of the proletariat who were drawing up the constitution of a large working-class organisation received "The Relation of the Present Historic Period to the Proletarian Idea" with jubilation. Lassalle was the man to unite the various Trades Unions and political tendencies in one channel, and he was, besides, a man of action, prestige and high intelligence. Within a short time Vahlteich, Fritzche and Dammer had sent him a letter inviting him to direct the growing working-class movement. One of the paragraphs of this letter reads as follows:

> "The three of us are dealing with this matter as members of the Committee, and we know of no one in Germany but yourself who could head a movement of such importance as this, who could carry through such a difficult task, and who at the same time is worthy of absolute confidence. You are the ideal man for the work, and we would all of us gladly submit to you."

The letter went on to say that all those who had read his pamphlet shared this opinion.

In a subsequent letter, Dammer wrote:

> "The foundation of a united working-class federation is in the minds of all. You can count on more than 30,000 members."

Lassalle accepted this invitation. And on March 1st, 1863, appeared his famous "Open Letter", a political programme in which classic demands predominate. The worker is to take part in national politics outside the framework of the Progressive Party. The support of the Progressive Party is only permissible in the struggle for political liberties. The proletariat must build up an independent political party, and the chief plank in their platform

must be general electoral rights, equal and direct. In order to achieve this they must act peacefully and legally. In this "Open Letter" Lassalle renewed the claims which the working classes had been making ever since 1848. Two very important points are made in the document. The first is that the proletariat must free themselves from progressive influences. During the reactionary period the masses had followed the Progressives blindly. The second point, which gave evidence of an excessively reformist conception of Socialism, and which later was to constitute tremendous risks for Social-democracy, was a demand for State subsidies for working-class associations—a consequence of Lassalle's idea of State. These demands—a dangerous plank in any working-class platform—were evidence of those tactical errors in Lassalle which the author of *Das Kapital* condemned so bitterly.

In certain newspapers on April 29th, 1863, the following letter was published:

> "In working-class assemblies held in Leipzig, Hamburg, Dusseldorf, Solingen and Cologne, it has been agreed to form a General Association of German Workers on the basis of the principles expounded by Ferdinand Lassalle in his 'Open Letter'. We give below the Statutes of this Association, and ask that they should be discussed at working-class meetings. During the following week we will call an Assembly of German workers in Leipzig in order to approve the Statutes and to elect the Executive Committee. *For and on behalf of the Foundation Committee of the General Association of German Workers :—J. Vahlteich, Otto Dammer.*"

A list of the Statutes followed.

After a number of incidents and propaganda meetings—at some of which Lassalle spoke for four hours on end—the General Association of German Workers was founded in Leipzig on May 23rd, 1863. Lassalle was elected President for five years, with Dammer as Vice-President and Vahlteich as Secretary.

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In the meantime an event occurred of historic dimensions, whose importance no one could have foreseen. On September 23rd, 1862, Bismarck seized the reins of government in Prussia. From the first, the Chancellor gave evidence of his characteristic qualities: the skill and cunning of a Metternich, the energy and brutality of an absolute monarch, and an overflowing Machiavellism in the widest sense of the term. On his accession to power, the Government lacked a Parliamentary majority. The Opposition consisted of the Progressives and the workers. Bismarck fought the former by relying on Conservative support and throw-

ing out a line to the proletariat. During all the years he was in power, he owed his tactical success to the ease with which he was able to deceive all Opposition parties, or rather, to the cunning with which he played off one group against the other. For Bismarck was an opportunist. The chessboard of German internal policy was soon familiar to him, and he moved the pieces at will. It was almost as though his adversaries were blindfolded. He supported the workers against the Progressives, the Liberals against the Catholics, the Catholics against the workers and the Liberals, the Progressives against the workers and the Catholics. He betrayed everyone, and ran the elections in his own way without the slightest scruple. All opposition to the policy of this Chancellar who had paralysed the will of the King was bound to fail.

In every Opposition party there was usually to be found a Bismarck agent. He promised the workers electoral rights, equal, general and direct, together with 60,000 to 80,000 talers for the creation of a Co-operative for agricultural machinery. He carried out repressive measures against the Opposition Press in order to increase the circulation of the Conservative papers. He knew everything that went on in the enemy organisation. In one way or another he managed to bribe the unbribable. He kept up a correspondence with revolutionaries who had not measured the stature of the man with whom they were dealing.

Professor Gustave Mayer has published the letters exchanged between Bismarck and Lassalle, and which were found in an old cupboard in the Prussian Ministry of the Interior. From their perusal it would seem that Bismarck, at war with the Progressives, invited Lassalle to meet him on May 11, 1863, "in order to draw attention to the situation of the working classes". It is evident that Bismarck tried to win over Lassalle to an alliance against the Progressives, and Lassalle, who hated them, seized the opportunity of obtaining from Bismarck the promise of general electoral rights and support for the foundation of the workers' Co-operative in Prussia. From that time until the end of February 1864, Lassalle was in correspondence with Bismarck. In his speeches he addressed the Chancellor indirectly. But the result of this policy was not proportionate to the dangers and mistakes involved.

When Marx learnt of Lassalle's negotiations, he condemned them as treacherous, and said that the workers were the victims of dangerous double-dealing. Lassalle, young, romantic and opportunist, did not realise that he was carrying on negotiations with a past master in the art of deception.

These negotiations, and many others of a similar nature on the part of Ferdinand Lassalle, can be explained, if not justified, by

his hatred of the Progressives. There was, for instance, his attitude to the Danish question. Lassalle defended the annexation of Schleswig-Holstein by Prussia, the consequence of Bismarck's policy. Richard Lipinski maintains that Lassalle's attitude is only comprehensible in view of his relations with Bismarck, and of his opposition to the Progressive Party, which fought against the annexation.

In 1863, when the Poles rebelled against the Czar, Lassalle's attitude was similar. He wanted an independent Poland protected by Germany, a policy which betrays either a supine ingenuousness or Imperialist designs. In connection with this question he resuscitated his Schleswig-Holstein thesis, and recommended that the German princes should retain at all costs the provinces snatched from Denmark in the war.

Ever since Lassalle's election to the Presidency of the General Association of German Workers, he had been furiously attacked by the Liberal Press, and a personal campaign directed by the Progressives was launched against the leader of the Trades Unions. There was nothing which calumny did not impute to this man, who, infantile and over-trusting though he may have been, had never been guilty of moral impurity. The *petite bourgeoisie* and the intellectuals insulted him and jeered at him, invading his meetings and provoking clashes with his supporters. His accession to the Presidency of the Trades Unions, and his pamphlet "Might and Right", had deeply wounded the susceptibilities of the Progressive Party. Lassalle at times lost his accustomed serenity, and it is by no means surprising, in view of his temperament, that he should have allied himself with the devil.

On the other hand, the General Association of German Workers, which demanded so many sacrifices of Lassalle, Vahlteich and the other leaders, seems to have been paralysed from birth. The 30,000 members to whom Dammer referred in a moment of optimism simply did not exist. There were, in fact, less than 4,600, while the Nationalverein, the Progressive organisation, had a membership of 20,000. With great bitterness Lassalle complained, "I am writing for a couple of individuals in Berlin." Berlin, in fact, was hostile to him. On one occasion when he was speaking of the capital of Prussia at a public meeting, the police appeared, climbed on to the platform and arrested him, to the accompaniment of applause.

Not least among the painful factors which influenced Lassalle were the personal conflicts in the Association. Vahlteich resigned his post of secretary. He rebelled against Lassalle, who was, in fact, playing the rôle of dictator in the Association—a natural consequence of the manner in which that entity had been formed

and of the almost mystical welcome which Vahlteich himself, together with the other founders, had given their leader.

On August 27th, 1864, Lassalle, embittered and ill, resigned the Chairmanship of the Association. He left for Switzerland, and four days later the duel took place in which he was to meet his death.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE CONFEDERATION OF NORTHERN GERMAN STATES

WITH THE disappearance of Lassalle there began a long period of internal crisis for the General Association of German Workers. Economically the Association was bankrupt. Thanks to Lassalle, who was its main financial support, the organisation had been able to develop without giving up its task of proselytising, but the sum of money left to the Association by the Socialist fighter in his will, was, unfortunately, appropriated by his mother and brother-in-law. This, however, was not the worst evil the Association had to suffer. On the death of Lassalle, the Countess of Hatzfeld decided to work for the proletarian movement, and it was her idea that the Association should retain the character and programme given it by its former President. Following in the footsteps of her friend, the Countess rendered it financial assistance, thus placing Becker, whom Lassalle in his will had recommended for the Presidency, in an undignified and dependent position. For the Countess, Lassalle's political ideas were gospel. This intransigent attitude on her part, the lamentable dictatorial precedent created by Lassalle, the fact that there was no one in the Association worthy to succeed him, and the continuous tactical and ideological differences which arose, created divisions and internal struggles lasting over a period of years.

Becker had neither the energy nor the ability to lead a proletarian organisation of such dimensions and in such conditions. A man of determination and prestige was needed. The Association looked for him in Schweitzer, but were disappointed. Schweitzer was a nervous type, active, despotic, and as neglectful of the moral concerns of the community as he was interested in personal success and prestige. He soon took charge of the machinery of the Association, and edited its organ, the *Sozialdemokrat*, whose policy he laid down according to his own view of Socialism, without attempting to bring it into line with the tactics of the organisation. Wilhelm Liebknecht, who with another useful member of the Communist group, Moses Hetz, had joined Lassalle, broke away from Schweitzer. The latter also clashed with Augustus Becker.

He declared war on the Countess, and in the early months of 1865 published in the *Sozialdemokrat* five articles under the title of "The Bismarck Ministry", putting forward a demand that Prussia, under the Hohenzollerns, should revive the policy of conquests, by fire and sword, of Frederick II. Marx and Engels, who collaborated in the *Sozialdemokrat*, broke with Schweitzer after the publication of these articles. Everyone suspected the Machiavellian hand of Bismarck in their composition.

The members of the Association approved Schweitzer's procedure, but the Countess, supported by two of its members, assailed both the Association and its President. Becker criticised the Countess in public. Liebknecht censured Lassalle's work, and said that the German organisation was becoming a section of the International Workers' Association. Liebknecht also attacked the journalistic dictatorship of Schweitzer, while Schweitzer criticised Marx's adherence to the International.

In spite of all this internal strife, however, the Association prospered, and by November 1865 it had a membership of 9,421.

In certain States, such as Saxony, the formation of political working-class associations was forbidden. On the other hand, cultural societies were permitted. As a consequence, various Arbeiterbildungsverein sprang up, educational groups whose non-political character did not, of course, prevent the airing of those political grievances, which were absorbing the attention of the more militant members.

Augustus Bebel was at the time fully employed in Saxony leading a huge strike of printers, men who, in the vanguard of the working-class movement, inspired the workers by their example.

The year 1865 was a year of strikes, particularly in Hamburg and Leipzig. The Arbeiterbildungsverein drew up their programme on the lines of that of the General Association of German Workers. Nevertheless, the proletariat were very much divided, although the various sections fought under the banner of Social democracy.

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The German bourgeoisie urgently desired a union of the German States under Prussia, which from the military point of view was the most efficient of them all. This unifying political movement, however, on account of its liberal character, met with considerable resistance in the Prussian Court. The Frankfurt Constitution of 1849, the first serious attempt to create the new German Empire, did not come into force, as Friedrich Wilhelm IV refused the Imperial crown offered him by the National Assembly on April 3rd of that year. The Prussian monarchy,

which relied on the social strength of the aristocracy and the Junkers, could only rule the Empire by making concessions to the Liberals, but the King of Prussia preferred to be an absolute monarch of the Prussians rather than a Parliamentary Emperor of all the Germans. In spite of this, however, the Prussian Monarchy has gone down to history as an Imperialist régime, ambitious to extend its hegemony beyond the frontiers of Germany.

The truth is that German unity, and the part played by the North in this political transformation, would not have been possible without the pressure of the industrial bourgeoisie. Viewed from this angle, national unity is an expression of the triumph—although not such a complete triumph as in England—of the middle classes over the backward and reactionary Prussian ruling classes. We shall soon see, however, how the bourgeois victory worked to the political advantage of the Prussian autocrats.

In Prussia itself there was, certainly, a group—represented politically by Bismarck—which coincided with the Liberals in a desire for unity. But this group took a long time to win over the throne and the Junkers to its way of thinking.

The chances of achieving German national unity in collaboration with Austria were extremely slender. The Empire had to be an entity in itself, and Austria would never accept Prussian supremacy. In the German Confederation Austria was a weighty factor, exercising considerable influence on the southern States, and the removal of Austria from German politics was therefore a necessity for the expansionist plans, not of Prussia actually, but of German Liberalism.

The foundation in September 1859 of the Deutscher Nationalverein (German National Union), whose programme was confined to a demand for a German Federal State based on the 1849 Constitution, was a clear indication that the unifying movement was rapidly gaining ground. The Schleswig-Holstein question was to cause a rupture between Austria and Prussia, and, after the Prussian victory over Austria, the elimination of Austrian influence in German politics.

In its origins the Schleswig-Holstein affair was a dispute between Denmark on the one hand and the German Powers on the other. Austria and Prussia wanted both duchies, whose population was chiefly German, to enjoy constitutional and administrative autonomy within the Danish State. This demand was conceded by Denmark, and the juridical position was confirmed in the London Protocol of 1852. It was not long, however, before the King of Denmark placed the administration of the territory in the hands of his own Government, whereupon the Holstein Parliament asked the German Confederation to oppose this

violation of the Protocol. Public opinion in Denmark was frankly annexationist, and finally forced Christian IX to seize the Schleswig duchy. The German population in the duchies, on the other hand, wanted to break away from Denmark.

Bismarck's scheme was to place these territories under the more or less direct domination of Prussia and, in the event of the duchies breaking away from Denmark, to incorporate them in Prussia. Austria did not approve Bismarck's plans, however, and expressed a desire that Schleswig-Holstein should be symbolically united to Denmark in the person of the Danish King. That is to say, the Austrian Government wanted to frustrate Bismarck's plans by placing the duchies under the nominal sovereignty of Denmark, in which case the German population would enjoy autonomy without coming under Prussian domination.

The violation of the London Protocol by the Danish King was the signal for the German Powers to prepare for war. They sent Denmark an ultimatum, which that country rejected, and Austrian and German troops commanded by General Wrangel invaded the disputed territory. It was not long before the Danish Government was forced to ask for an armistice, upon which Austria and Prussia proposed the segregation of Schleswig-Holstein, and its independence as a single State under the Duke of Augustenburg. Denmark, however, who was hoping for assistance from Britain and France, refused these conditions. War broke out again, and the German troops continued their advance without encountering any great resistance, until the Danish were finally forced once more to sue for peace. In the Treaty of Vienna of January 30th, 1864, it was agreed that Denmark should give up the two duchies to Austria and Prussia.

An Austro-Prussian Government was thereupon set up in Schleswig-Holstein, but a dispute immediately broke out among the victors. Austria said that the territory should be governed by the Duke of Augustenburg, while Bismarck, who had previously agreed to this, now decided that the two duchies should come under Prussian rule. Feeling in Schleswig-Holstein in favour of the Duke having been inflamed by Austrian propaganda, Prussia felt that she must put an end to the matter by violent means. Bismarck, however, was anxious that Napoleon III of France should remain neutral, and this anxiety, among other things, was the reason for the provisional Treaty of Gastein signed between Prussia and Austria in August 1865.

The French Emperor, as was his custom, began to play a double game. At a meeting with Bismarck in Biarritz, he allayed the German Chancellor's fears, assuring him that France looked with satisfaction on Prussian expansion in the north of Germany.

On April 8th, 1866, Prussia signed an alliance with Italy, while Austria, on her side, turned to the French Emperor for help. And Napoleon, who was trying to deceive both Powers, did all he could to prevent Italy from entering the war on the side of Prussia. For this service Austria promised Venice to France, in return for which Napoleon intended to help the Austrians to dismember Prussia.

At last war broke out between the Powers, and it was soon seen that Prussia could only count on the support of a few small German States. The rest allied themselves with Austria. Italy, however, in spite of Napoleon's double-dealing, finally entered the war on the side of the Prussians.

The Austrian Army suffered a final defeat on July 3rd, 1866, at Königgrätz, Bohemia, and the French Emperor, hoping to cut short the German advance, offered his services as mediator. With the idea of turning the catastrophe to his own advantage, he tried to obtain from Bismarck consent to the annexation of Luxembourg, and the conquest of Belgium, by France. The Chancellor, however, merely laughed at this suggestion, and Napoleon had to go away empty-handed.

The final peace signed by Austria and Prussia in Prague on August 23rd, 1866, contained the embryo of the Reich of 1871. Prussia extended her rule to Hanover, the northern part of the Grand Duchy of Hesse, Nassau and Frankfurt. The southern States remained independent, but they agreed to form a defensive and offensive alliance with Prussia. In this way Bavaria, Würtemberg and Baden entered the new Confederation of Northern States governed by Prussia.

Fresh forces appeared in the Constituent Parliament of the Confederation. The Progressives were divided into two groups, one of which became the National-Liberal Party under Rudolf von Bennigsen. The bourgeoisie, who saw in Bismarck the champion of German unity, were ready to give him their full support, and the National-Liberal Party in future was to represent the interests of heavy industry in German politics. Its political creed was to be the expansion of the Reich, its philosophy pan-Germanism. Industry, commerce and finance found in the National-Liberals the servants of that eruptive Imperialism which in time was to bring Germany to ruin.

The Northern Constituent Parliament summoned by Bismarck approved a Constitution on April 17th, 1867, which established a Confederation of the Northern German States, to be presided over by the King of Prussia and ruled by a Chancellor whom the President should appoint. A Bundesrat (Senate) and a Reichstag Chamber of people's representatives were created.

The general electoral rights promised by Bismarck were forgotten, however, by all save the parties of the Opposition. The Chamber refused to establish a system of salaries for its members, a decision which, of course, represented a veto on working-class candidates. It was aimed against them, and was retained until well into the twentieth century. But the Social-democratic Party, as soon as they were in a position to do so, handsomely indemnified their Parliamentary representatives.

For the first time the Socialist members faced the oligarchies across the floor of the Chamber, where they did not hesitate to indulge in some plain speaking, and where Schweitzer laid down minimum demands. But Bismarck brushed aside all obstacles; the power of capitalism and the adventurous spirit of the bourgeoisie were bringing abundant grist to his mill.

From this time onwards it can be said that the political unity of Germany was a fact, the only remaining task being to give it an organic function. This was done in 1871.

As in all countries where the middle classes found themselves faced from the day of their birth with a powerful aristocracy, in Germany the bourgeoisie arrived in power by means of a compromise with the old ruling classes. The singular conditions in which German capitalism had developed, however, placed the old traditional Prussia in a position of supremacy over the new ruling classes and other States. In the compromise of the capitalists with the great landowners, the former had to give up more than their prototypes in other countries had done. The immediate result of this was that the King of Prussia, later to become Emperor, continued to enjoy powers which elsewhere resided in Parliament. In Germany the middle classes obtained far less favourable terms from the feudal aristocracy than in England.

There were various reasons why the industrialists and business men were forced to submit to the reactionary rule of Prussia, but the chief cause of this phenomenon must be looked for in the long-delayed but very rapid industrial revolution in Germany. German capitalism, as I have already said, urgently desired national union, which was a necessary premise for industrial expansion and the struggle for foreign markets. The process—industrial revolution, national unity, industrial expansion, Imperialism—which lasted in England for three centuries, was carried out by Germany in seventy years (1840–1914). German capitalism, anxious to fight for world markets and to gain raw materials, chose the shortest way to national unification, even at the risk of remaining inferior in political power to the German aristocracy. For if the German middle classes had spent as long in their fight against feudalism as the British middle classes

spent in their fight against the Crown, Parliament would have gained in power, certainly, but German capitalism would have been suffocated within the Reich frontiers the day after its political victory, if not before. The world was almost completely carved up between the various European Powers by the time German national unity was achieved, and the process of achieving it was therefore a hasty one. The only condition imposed by the German Liberals for the recognition of Prussian hegemony was that Prussia should accept the idea of national unity as an essential political principle. Prussia, however, was not Imperialist, but militarist, and there is a world of difference in the meaning of these two terms. It was this lack of Imperialist feeling on the part of Prussia which prevented the realisation of national unity in 1849.

The military efficiency of Prussia was another reason for the Imperialist middle classes to sign a pact with the militarists. In the realm of revolutionary violence, the business men and industrialists would have encountered a dangerous enemy if they had insisted on overthrowing the autocracy. And, on the other hand, the alliance of Prussian militarism with Imperialism gave hopes of a rapid expansion of German capitalism. The Prussian victory over Austria turned Bismarck into the hero of the German middle classes, and five years later, when Prussia conquered France, the adherence of the Imperialists to Prussian militarism became unconditional.

The German middle classes carried through their revolution, but, by reason of the delay with which German Imperialism appeared on the world scene, they had to yield more to their political antagonists than their equivalent social classes in other countries had done. It was inevitable that this Imperialism should be a virulent one. It must be remembered that Britain had for two centuries enjoyed the privilege of being the only industrial nation, and the absence of dangerous competitors had allowed the British to build up their Empire by slow degrees. Spread over three centuries, British aggression was insignificant, and had acquired the character of a civilising and progressive force. But if the process of British capitalism had been compressed into the space of seventy years, it would have borne a very different aspect.

Prussian militarism, supported by the new German Imperialism, was inevitably a menace to civilisation. In this case quantity, by virtue of a dialectic reason or principle, became converted into quality. The impulse of the German bourgeoisie was no longer Imperialism, but incendiarism. Germany set out to conquer a world which had already been conquered by others, and she could not therefore advance without meeting terrible resistance. And as the mentality of the Prussian Army was still a

mediæval one, the conflict between the Reich and the rest of the world would necessarily be singularly violent.

I intend to stress this point on various occasions during the course of this history, particularly when dealing with the Treaty of Versailles.

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Something must now be said concerning the repercussion on the German working-class movement of the political transformation effected by Bismarck after the Austro-Prussian War. It was the first time that the working class had gone to the polls with any chance of obtaining representation, and although scattered, they formed an autonomous political party. The General Association of Workers revised its programme, and brought it up to date. The Lassallites nominated Liebknecht, who was at the time imprisoned in Berlin, as candidate. This nomination, however, did not please Schweitzer, and, against the decision of a supreme assembly, he rejected the proposal.

The members of the Saxon Workers' Educational Society agreed on the necessity for transforming their organisation into a political party, and with the assistance of Fritzche, Försterling, Röthing and other members of Schweitzer's organisation, they founded the Saxon People's Party (Sächsische Volkspartei) on a democratic basis. There was very little difference between its programme and that of the Association; Bebel, however, deplored the fact that the Saxons had not approved a purely Socialist policy, though he afterwards confessed that he had not insisted on this point, as he did not want to prejudice the unity of the new organisation.

Once again the Countess began to manœuvre and intrigue. Trading on her intimacy with Lassalle and the prestige which she enjoyed among the workers, she put forward at the meeting of the General Association of Workers, held in Erfurt on December 27th, 1866, a programme of an insupportably national character, in opposition to that of the Association, and did her best to have an ally of hers, Försterling, elected as President. Schweitzer made every attempt to end these differences, differences which in a political party are always dangerous, and never so much so as on the eve of an election. With certain modifications, the Chauvinistic programme of the Countess was approved. Its fourth article, demanding "a glorious future for the German people", called for the creation of workers' societies subsidised by the State, "in accordance with the principles of Lassalle".

Acceptance of the Countess's programme was a useless expedient, however, for when that great lady learnt that Försterling had not been elected President, she formed a new party with her own candidate at the head.

Three Socialist parties, each fighting for itself, and with no financial backing, nominated candidates for the elections to the Northern Parliament—each against the other, and all demoralised by attachment to personalities. Fortunately this demoralisation was counteracted by the attitude of the masses. "To the elections!" was the cry of the working classes; the people, certainly, were ready to fight at the polls. And they fought well, as in a crusade, on that 31st day of August, 1867. In one industrial district, Social-democracy—the workers' parties—polled 18,000 votes. Bismarck, on the other hand, received only 6,500 votes in Elberfeld-Barmen.

For the Countess's party, Försterling was victorious; for the Saxon People's Party Bebel, Liebknecht, Dr. Götz and one Schraps—the last two bourgeois democrats—were elected; while Schweitzer and Reincke represented the General Association of German Workers in Parliament. Thus there were virtually only three Social-democratic members: Bebel, Liebknecht and Schweitzer. Bebel and Liebknecht were the adversaries, theoretically, of Lassalle. Schweitzer, less radical, at times excessively opportunist, perhaps influenced by the memory of Lassalle, belonged to a party of one.

Bebel and Liebknecht had proposed to make the Saxon People's Party a section of the International Association of Workers. This is an evidence of their *rapprochement* to Marx and their distance from the Lassalle groups. They both felt that the democratic position was not enough, and that it was essential to turn towards the Socialism expounded by Marx. Bebel therefore brought pressure to bear on the workers' educational organisations in order that they should take an increasingly active part in political affairs. Various Congresses of the Saxon People's Party were held; one in Frankenberg, another in Gera. At the latter Bebel was elected President. The time had come to form a group adhering to the International, and Liebknecht and Robert Schweichel were given the task of drawing up a programme in harmony with that of the International Workers' Association. When the news of this proposal penetrated to the members of the Party and the Liberal Press, however, the *petit bourgeois* began to be exercised in mind. But Bebel, Liebknecht and Vahlteich did not retreat; they had considerable Socialist support, and the time was ripe for a change. Bebel wrote at the time to Lange: "In Saxony our movement is progressing admirably; proletarian organisations are springing up like mushrooms. In our electoral district there is no place of any importance without a workers' association."

Matters had reached this stage when the Saxon People's Party

held a Congress in Nüremberg on September 5th, 6th, and 7th, 1868. Delegates from Austria and Switzerland were present. The Central Council of the International was represented by Eccarins, of London; Bebel was elected President with a two-thirds majority, and Schweitzer and Liebknecht sketched the essential lines of the new party. The membership of the International was at that time 60,000. Liebknecht made a few comments on *Das Kapital*, which had appeared the previous year, and stressed the necessity for the working class to become organised on an international basis. The new programme was approved by sixty-nine votes to forty-six. As was only natural, the Liberals created disturbances, and some of their delegates, representing 3,000 votes, abruptly left the meeting, automatically creating a division between the liberalising bourgeoisie and the Socialist proletariat. Paragraphs from the Nüremberg programme read as follows:

"The emancipation of the working classes is the task of the working classes themselves." . . .

"Political liberty is an essential condition for the economic liberation of the proletariat." . . .

"The social question is inseparable from the political one.". . .

"The emancipation of the worker is not a local or national problem, but a social problem which affects every country."

The party organ was the *Demokratische Wochenblatt*, published in Leipzig with 1,200 subscribers.

From that time the whole of the working-class and Socialist movement revolved around the figures of Bebel and Liebknecht. The dictatorship of Schweitzer, who had already been raised to the Presidency of the General Association of German Workers, could not resist the attacks of these two men. Trades Unions were organised against the wishes of the Hatzfeld group, who, as faithful followers of Lassalle, were opposed to them. And most important of all, Bebel and Liebknecht paved the way for the unity of the German working class, punishing all lack of discipline, and demoralising the groups of Schweitzer and Hatzfeld.

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The first step towards unity was taken with the convening in Eisenach on August 7th, 1869, of a United Front Congress, from which sprang the "Workers' Socialist Party". Among the signatories to the letter of convocation were Bracke, York, Liebknecht and Bebel. The Trades Unions adhering to Schweitzer, independent organisations of the General Association of German Workers, were dissolved, and their members entered the ranks of the new party, known subsequently as the "Eisenach Group"—a

great victory, for these Unions had a membership of more than 10,000.

With unknown dangers ahead, the German proletariat closed their ranks. Workers' organisations and Trades Unions increased abundantly, and in accordance with Marx's wishes, democratic measures were taken in the working-class societies. Until 1870 the struggle was characterised by the obstinate attempts of the producer masses to take their places as a class in the realm of German politics; every national or political assembly of the proletariat meant another step away from the *petite bourgeoisie*, a further break from the Progressives, a challenge to everything ambiguous, obscure or confused. If we go back in thought to the year 1870, we find in Germany the beginnings of a compact army of workers.

But once again warlike clarions rent the air. Bismarck was preparing to raise the Prussian flag in Paris. In such a crisis what was the duty of the proletariat?

CHAPTER SIX

THE FOUNDATION OF THE REICH

After the Revolution of 1868, the Spanish Government searched Europe for a monarch to place on the throne of Spain. Their choice of a German king was due largely to the following incident, an instance of the "mighty contests" which "rise from trivial things."

The Spanish Prime Minister in 1870 was General Prim, who, like many others in the Spain of his time, was both a soldier and a politician. Prim had conspired against Isabel II, for whose dethronement he was largely responsible, and as a result of his revolutionary activities he was forced in 1866 to take refuge in France. Napoleon III, however, either under pressure from the Spanish Government, or on his own account, drove Prim from the country, and he was obliged to seek asylum in Belgium.

From that time Don Juan Prim conceived a hatred of the French Emperor, and there is no doubt that his anxiety to give the Spanish crown to a Hohenzollern was due, at least in part, to his desire for revenge. It is more than possible, therefore, that Napoleon's violent treatment of a political refugee cost him the throne of France. The Spanish throne was finally offered to Prince Leopold von Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen, who accepted it without obtaining the consent of King Wilhelm. At first Napoleon III made no objection to the proposal. Suddenly, however, the French Press initiated a campaign against Prince Leopold, hinting that he was one of Bismarck's tools. The Paris Govern-

ment echoed this suspicion, and it was maintained that the occupation of the Spanish throne by a Hohenzollern would strengthen Prussia and would represent, *ipso facto*, a danger to France. The Duc de Grammont even went so far as to say in the French Chamber that France would not tolerate a foreign Power placing one of its princes on the throne of Charles V. These words fell on German ears like a thunder-clap. Prince Leopold withdrew his claim, and the French Ambassador informed the German Government that the King must publicly renounce the Spanish throne on behalf of his son. The King agreed, and ordered Bismarck to telegraph this agreement to the Ambassador. But the former, whose principal ambition was the unity of Germany, acted with his usual cunning. He worded the King's reply in such a way that France was left with scarcely any option but to declare war on Prussia. France, however, ready to avenge Königgrätz, was nothing loth, and on July 19th, 1870, she opened hostilities. Napoleon III stood alone, and cannot have realised what he was doing. Bismarck was quite certain in advance that Prussian troops would enter Paris.

Obviously to the writer the most interesting aspect of the war of 1870 is the attitude of the militant proletariat. It is a period rich in incidents and conflicts. For the first time, in fact, Socialism had to state its position in relation to the definite fact of war, with all the ambiguities, psychoses, psychological phenomena and popular reactions which are the necessary corollary of war-time conditions.

The King of Prussia stated from the beginning that the war was directed solely against the French Emperor, which meant that once Napoleon was vanquished, Prussia would have no interest in any further conquest. The French and German Socialists and the Marxist International were faced with the problem of determining the character of the war: Was it offensive or defensive? Who was the aggressor? Who the victim? Should the proletariat defend the attacked country? Over such varied and complex problems the Socialists differed among themselves. The French members of the Marxist International had already expressed their opinion a week before the declaration of war; "A war for supremacy and over dynastic questions is, in the eyes of the working class, criminal folly," stated the manifesto of the French Socialists. Stormy meetings, characterised chiefly by nervousness and indecision, took place, at the majority of which the proletariat subscribed to the French manifesto. But when the drums began to roll and flags were borne through the German streets, grave doubts arose in Socialist minds. Schweitzer discovered that France was to blame, and that Germany must accept a defensive war as an unavoidable evil. On July 23rd the General

Council of the International in London sent a statement in support of Schweitzer which, after censuring the policy of Napoleon III and the Hohenzollerns, stated that Germany was fighting a war of defence, and advised the workers to stress the defensive nature of the conflict.

German Socialism, however, rested on two firm and solid columns—Bebel and Liebknecht. These two men declared openly that German responsibility was as great as that of France. In the Northern Parliament they refused to vote war credits, thus bringing on themselves the unanimous censure of the Socialists, and even of the Executive Committee of the Eisenach Party. On July 24th this Committee stated in a manifesto that the proletariat should support the war.

Fortunately the turn of events brought agreement among the Socialists. On September 2nd the French were defeated at Sedan, Napoleon was taken prisoner, and the Republic triumphed in Paris. No one any longer advocated the continuation of the war. Was not Napoleon overthrown? But Bismarck, spurred on by the bourgeoisie, who had made him the object of their hero-worship, was not ready to stop there. On August 3rd the leaders of the National-Liberal Party and the Progressives met in Berlin, where they drew up a manifesto to the German people, and a letter to the Prussian King, demanding the annexation of Alsace and Lorraine, demands which were given great Press publicity. The bourgeoisie continually urged the Chancellor to rectify the omission of 1815. "For Alsace and Lorraine!" was their cry. Alsace and Lorraine possessed the richest iron-ore mines in Europe.

In the meantime the Socialists had re-formed their ranks. The Lassalle group, the Schweitzer group, the Eisenach Party and the London International, all opposed to the annexation of Alsace and Lorraine, united to check Bismarck and the bourgeoisie in their headlong course. The journal of Liebknecht and Bebel, *Demokratische Wochenblatt*, renamed *Volkstaat*, opened fire on Bismarck's Imperialist policy. A Socialist manifesto, inviting the proletariat to demonstrate against the annexation of Alsace and Lorraine, was widely circulated. This manifesto quoted a letter from Marx to his friend Sarge, repeatedly commented on since 1914, in which the founder of "scientific" Socialism stated that the annexation of Alsace and Lorraine would accentuate the historic enmity between France and Germany, and would inevitably provoke another war.

The National-Liberals denounced the signatories to the manifesto. A few Social-democrats were arrested, and were sent to a fortress on the Russian frontier. Persecution of the Socialists increased, but they endured it bravely.

In the meantime France was being ground down beneath the Prussian heel. Alsace-Lorraine was annexed, and Germany claimed a war indemnity of 4,000 million marks. In Versailles Wilhelm I was proclaimed Emperor of Germany, and with flowers and songs and the waving of flags an ingenuous people received the victorious troops. The Constitution of the Northern States became the Constitution of the Empire, and Prussian legislation extended to the rest of the new Germany.

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When Bismarck announced the Constitution of the Reich, German unity, as I have indicated, had already in reality been achieved through capitalist development. In this process the ideal did not conflict with the real, as in the case of Italy. Unity was created by economic forces, which ignored all barriers, and demanded a political union on Cæsarean lines. Unity in Germany, therefore, rather than the work of Bismarck, was a biological necessity of capitalism, as was the *rapprochement* of Bavaria and Würtemberg in 1829.

There was not even a Mazzini to oppose Bismarck's ambitions, for national unity was one of the political demands of Socialism, included in the programme of all the working-class groups. Marx himself stressed the importance for the Socialist movement of a State run on constitutional lines. It was soon realised, however, that Imperialist power had increased with national unity, and that Prussian autocracy would in future be even more hostile to the working classes.

Bismarck's fire was first directed towards Liebknecht and Bebel, and in December 1870 he ordered their imprisonment. Four months later they were liberated, but were not allowed to leave Leipzig. Speeches, pamphlets and Socialist communications which had scarcely any bearing on the war were brought forward in evidence against them. Their accusers even made use of the "Communist Manifesto", and of an unpublished and unknown document by a Republican, "The European Soldier to his Comrades", which was discovered by the Leipzig police. The bourgeois, Conservative and Liberal Press did everything possible to coerce the judges. Charged with high treason, Liebknecht and Bebel appeared before the Tribunal in March 1872, where they maintained their political principles, and were condemned to two years' imprisonment. Before leaving for Hubertusburg prison they sent to the Party members and the workers an inspiring message, full of confidence in final victory.

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Misfortune caused by a common enemy is an excellent conciliator. With the creation of German unity and of a united front

against the annexation of Alsace-Lorraine, conditions already existed, in principle, for a *rapprochement* between the various Socialist Parties. In order to be able to fight the Socialist Party of Eisenach more successfully, Schweitzer had made peace with the Countess of Hatzfeld. The Socialists were therefore divided into two groups —the Lassallites and the Eisenach Party. Fundamentally, the factor dividing one from the other was the form of their internal organisations—while the Eisenach group had a democratic régime, the Schweitzer Party was a dictatorship; the overthrow of this dictatorship by the masses, however, paved the way to unity. The journal of the General Association of German Workers failed through lack of subscribers. In April 1871 Schweitzer was defeated in the Reichstag elections. And finally in the Congress of May 19th, 1871, the delegates passed a motion of unanimous censure on the administrative conduct of this puppet dictator, and forced him to resign from the Presidency. His place was taken by Hasenclever, under whose leadership the Association increased in strength and changed its policy towards the Eisenach Socialists. A few days before the fall of Schweitzer, some of the Countess's followers in the Lassalle group joined the Workers' Socialist Party, and shortly afterwards Augustus Kuhn, of Bremen, published an "Open Letter" advocating the unity of German Socialism.

The Workers' Socialist Party expanded. It edited a dozen or so weekly papers and owned a printing-works in Leipzig, where copious editions of pamphlets and manifestos were published.

In January 1874 further Reichstag elections took place. Social-democracy obtained 351,490 votes (6 per cent. of the total), of which 171,351 were polled by the Eisenach Party, and 180,139 by the Lassalle group—a curious balance of power, affording a reasonable argument for union. By a not unusual electoral paradox, however, the Lassalle group gained three seats, and the Eisenach group six. It need hardly be said that Bebel and Liebknecht, although still imprisoned, were among the deputies of the Workers' Socialist Party. Parliament refused to liberate them, however, so that of the nine representatives of the people, only seven took their places in the Reichstag.

The presence of nine Socialist deputies in the National Parliament was a disturbing reality for the Chancellor and the bourgeoisie. It meant that an enemy existed within the frontiers of the German Reich. The reflecting powers of the proletariat, their class consciousness and political sense, were in violent contrast with the triumphant enthusiasm of the bourgeoisie in its rapid march towards Imperialism. As was to be expected, there was a wave of police persecution, resulting in the closing of working-

class centres and the imprisonment of provincial leaders, and threatening to destroy all possibilities of a future for the workers. These occurrences made it clear to the Social-democratic groups that they must form a united front against the Chancellor. In October 1874 negotiations began between Liebknecht, once more at liberty, and Toelke, representing the Lassalle group, which were successfully concluded. Two months later, Hasenclever informed the members of the Association that unity was near, a statement which was echoed by the *Volkstaat*, the journal of the Workers' Socialist Party. Shortly after this there was a United Front demonstration in Berlin; while a further manifestation in Hamburg, on the occasion of the funeral of York, an outstanding figure in the working-class movement, brought about the union of all the Social-democrats.

In the spring of the following year, 1875, the historic Congress of Gotha took place. The 9,121 members of the Eisenach Party were represented by fifty-six delegates, and the 15,322 members of the Lassalle group by seventy-three, while two Presidents, Hasenclever and Geib, were elected, one for each group, with equal powers. Liebknecht drew up a draft programme, and Hasenclever draft Statutes, all of which were approved. Of this Congress was born the German Workers' Socialist Party.

Marx attacked the new programme of Social-democracy. He and Engels criticised the fact that Lassalle's ideas should figure so conspicuously, and said that the programme represented a step backwards from the theoretical policy of Eisenach. Marx also wrote that the bourgeoisie was not "a reactionary mass", and that the "bronze law of wages", originally a Lassalle theory, did not exist; the law of wages, he said, was elastic and variable. The formation of workers' co-operatives with State assistance was another demand which he criticised. Lassalle had always opposed Trades Union organisations by all the means in his power, and it need hardly be said that Marx attacked this attitude. Bebel and Liebknecht, however, excused the Gotha programme. "An official programme does not bind the Party to follow the policy laid down therein. . . . The important thing is what the Party does." "But a new programme", replied Engels, "is, nevertheless, a banner waving in the breeze, the effigy of the Party." Gotha was a compromise. Everything was sacrificed there to the unity of the German working-class and Socialist movement.

CHAPTER SEVEN

GERMAN IMPERIALISM AND SOCIAL-DEMOCRACY

GERMAN IMPERIALISM grew to maturity with the brutal humiliation of France after the annexation of Alsace and Lorraine in 1871. No sooner was peace signed than there awakened in France a desire for revenge; the seeds of the first world war were sown the day that Bismarck and the new German Emperor left the Palace of Versailles. Germany was well aware of this, and after the creation of the Reich, Bismarck's chief concern was to raise an army that should be the most powerful in Europe. The lion's share of the national budget was henceforth devoted to this purpose, and the time came when even the bourgeoisie began to be alarmed. The indemnity extracted from France was used to strengthen the German military system and to recompense the oligarchy surrounding the Chancellor. But the Reich needed a permanent income, and the question of indirect taxes and tariffs consequently arose. The fact was that the masses were bearing on their narrow shoulders the tremendous burden of Empire, of Court orgies and of industry. Free trade was therefore replaced by protection; overnight Germany changed her national economy, and from a nation of wheat exporters became a country of importers. The farmers demanded prohibitive tariffs on corn, while —owing to the competition of Canada, Russia, Egypt and India— the price of cereals dropped alarmingly. On the other hand, industrial production increased by leaps and bounds. Industry took away labour from the land, and German industrial products flooded the international market, where they established an excellent reputation for themselves. With the expansion of industry the population of the Reich increased. Bismarck was by now a prince; the Emperor had rewarded his excellent services to the throne with the Sachsenwald Estate, property comprising 75,000 acres and worth 9 million marks.

In Germany an intermittent struggle had long been waged between agriculture and industry. The great landowners, with that sense of inferiority implanted in them by industrial development, had always felt that their governments were disposed to favour industry, an accusation which was extended by the Junkers to Bismarck. The Chancellor, however, had raised tariff walls against iron as well as wheat and cattle, obeying in this respect the cry of the hour: "Protection for the work of the nation!" But in spite of his reactionary and Imperialist policy, he did not achieve the support of all the middle-class parties. When the Liberals

were not attacking him, it was the Progressives or the Catholics. One party, however—the Social-democrats—was his constant and implacable enemy. In order to make war on the Catholics in that campaign known to history by the pompous name of Kulturkampf, Bismarck relied on Liberal support. Needing the Catholics in his fight against Free Trade, however, he abandoned the Liberals and made his peace with the Vatican, after uttering the famous words, "We will not go to Canosa." [1] But Bismarck would always have been ready to go to Canosa if the necessity for a majority in the Reichstag had demanded such a course. With this necessity foremost in his mind, therefore, and in order to join issue with the Social-democrats, he made certain concessions in his Protectionist policy, a policy challenged by a section of the Liberal bourgeoisie partly through opportunism and partly because of their Free Trade mentality.

The Chancellor undoubtedly felt strong enough to deal with all obstacles which might arise in his path. His attitude was so autocratic, however, that he ran the risk of being confronted with a temporarily united front of the *petite bourgeoisie* and the Socialists. Besides this, his absolutist temperament could not readily endure a Parliamentary régime—hence his conflicts with every political party in turn, and his sudden plan to overthrow Social-democracy, in which task he presumed that he would gain the unconditional support of the bourgeoisie by voicing anti-Socialist slogans and stressing the peril of Social-democracy for the middle classes. In this supposition, however, he was mistaken.

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Was Social-democracy a serious menace to the State? A brief examination of the German Socialism of those days will show that it was. The Socialists' offensive extended throughout the German Empire, and there can be no doubt that their implacable and persistent criticism prejudiced Bismarck's Imperialist plans. German Socialism had begun to organise methodically and efficiently; the German Workers' Socialist Party had 145 public speakers, all well informed on the expansionist and anti-working-class policy of Bismarck. Twenty-four working-class journals, among them a satirical paper, *Neue Welt*, with some 100,000 subscribers, disseminated Socialist theories and attacked the ferocious policy of the Prussian autocrat. In the general elections of January 10th, 1877, Socialism obtained 140,000 more votes than in 1874. For the first time the Party gained a resounding victory in the towns and industrial districts. Berlin and Dresden returned Socialist

[1] An historic allusion to a royal dispute of the German Emperor Henry IV (1056–1106) with the Papacy.

deputies, and in all there were twelve representatives of Socialism in the Reichstag.

It need hardly be said that the bourgeoisie, including the Progressives, did not greet this Social-democratic triumph with enthusiasm. It was the Progressives who coined a phrase "Parties of order", later to become famous, with which they drew a dividing-line between the Socialists and the other political groups. The reader can easily imagine the reaction of the great industrial middle classes and landowners, of the large capitalists, and finally of Prince Bismarck. For Socialism the die had been cast; police repression would henceforth be increased. It was the eve of Bismarck's historic legislation against Social-democracy.

Politics is a form of war, and in both spheres the pretext for any specific procedure plays an important part. It is not enough that a Government should desire to oppress a political party; an excuse is needed, some incident which will make it possible to indulge in persecution with the minimum of moral and material expenditure on the part of the oppressor. Sometimes this pretext is slow to arrive; the conduct of the political party concerned may not justify the thorough repression which the Government would like to carry out. In such a case, the impatient Government looks for an *agent provocateur*, who is instructed in his delicate task. And then, sure enough, appears the desired motive. Bismarck, whose spies and agents were active in every hostile political organisation, did not need to provoke a Reichstag fire in order to incite the bourgeois parties against Social-democracy. Two disturbers of the peace gave the Chancellor the necessary excuse to round up Social-democracy and outlaw it for twelve years.

On May 11th, 1878, about three o'clock in the afternoon, when Wilhelm I was driving along the Unter den Linden with the Grand Duchess of Baden, a tin worker named Hödel, standing up in a cart which had drawn level with the royal carriage, fired two shots at the Emperor and fled towards the Brandenburger Tor. No one was hurt; the aggressor threw away his fire-arm, and was soon captured. On August 16th of the same year he was executed in Moabit.

There was nothing in Hödel's statement to show that he had had any contact with Social-democracy. As soon as Bismarck learnt of the assault, however, he telegraphed a member of the Government: "Law of exclusion against the Socialists." Nine days after this event the text of the bill against Social-democracy had been distributed among the deputies, and on May 23rd and 24th it was fully debated in the Reichstag. Wilhelm Liebknecht, for the Socialists, said on this occasion:

"Gentlemen: In the name of the Socialist minority, I have a statement to make.

"The intention of taking advantage of the act of a madman, before justice has pronounced sentence, in order to carry out repressive measures, long since planned, against a party which condemns the crime in all its aspects and which maintains the independence of the political and economic development of the human will, is so evident to every unprejudiced being that we, the representatives of the Social-democratic electorate of Germany, are obliged to make known the following:

"We consider it incompatible with our dignity to take part in a discussion on the laws of exclusion submitted to Parliament. We will not allow any provocation, whatsoever its origin, to disturb us. We will take part in the voting. We consider it our duty to try to ensure that no similar attack shall be made against the will of the people. We will do everything possible to prevent such an attack, and we will record our votes.

"The Reichstag will agree on the procedure it considers most desirable. German Social-democracy, accustomed to persecution and struggles, will face further struggles and persecution with the serenity demanded by a just and invincible cause."

This time the Socialists parried the blow of the Iron Chancellor. Fifty-seven deputies voted for the bill; 251 against. The National-Liberals were divided. Bismarck, defeated, decided that the time was not yet ripe for his scheme.

Providence was on the Chancellor's side, however, and a month later he was given a second pretext to attack Social-democracy in the form of another attempt on the life of Wilhelm I. On June 2nd Dr. Karl Nobiling, who lived on the second floor of No. 18, Unter den Linden, from the window of his room fired two shots with a double-barrelled rifle at the Emperor, seriously wounding him. He then locked his door and shot himself through the head, saying before he lost consciousness: "I don't know what made me do it. I have no cause to hate His Majesty." It would seem that the reason for Nobiling's crime was a craving for that notoriety which the Press had bestowed on Hödel, but the Socialists were not slow to realise what its consequences would be. The first anti-Socialist law had been rejected by Parliament; a second could only be avoided by a miracle. Although Nobiling, like Hödel, apparently had no connection with Social-democracy, the hostile Press set themselves to prove that his ideas were of a Socialist nature. Throughout the country, from Bavaria to Pomerania, from East Prussia to Westphalia, a violent and slanderous campaign was unleashed against the political movement of the proletariat. Bismarck, with his appeals

to the bourgeois parties, was by no means the slowest in inciting the people to anger. Nobiling had wounded the Emperor, but his bullets pierced other targets as well. Tremendous harm was done to the cause of Social-democracy and of the National-Liberal Party, which was at the time contending with Bismarck over a question of the distribution of Cabinet posts. On Bismarck's orders, the Imperial Council dissolved the Reichstag on June 11th. It was the psychological moment for fresh elections to be held, and for the Chancellor to obtain a strong majority, which so far he had not enjoyed. In the election campaign all parties attacked Social-democracy. Bismarck, however, also launched a fierce assault on the National-Liberals; his rifle, too, was a double-barrelled one.

There is neither time nor space here to relate the outrages committed against Social-democracy in that historic election. A wave of hatred spread over the country; the anti-Socialist laws were applied even before Parliament had approved them. The Progressives, former friends of the workers, paraded the streets with a banner bearing the words, "Social-democracy must be thrown out of the Reichstag." The elections took place on July 30th, the National-Liberals losing twenty-nine seats and the Conservatives gaining thirty-eight. Bismarck had certainly good cause to be grateful to Nobiling. In spite of the furious campaign against the Socialists, however, they retained nine seats, and among their deputies were the most outstanding members of the Party: Bebel, Liebknecht, Bracke, Vahlteich. The Party did best in the industrial territory of Saxony, from which district six out of the nine members were returned.

The draft Exclusion Bill against the Socialists clearly stated the reasons for their persecution: "The pathological ideas of Socialism, the enemy of Society and the State, cannot be stamped out by common law. Hence the urgency of this law of exclusion." All the middle-class parties agreed on this point, and all voted for the Bill. The Catholic Party alone was inclined to parry this monstrous attack on human liberty, and proposed that, at the most, the repressive measures of the Penal Code should be increased. The Conservatives, however, considered this too lenient, and moved that all Socialist employees should be deprived of their suffrage rights. The National-Liberals were ready to vote unhesitatingly for Bismarck's policy.

After a series of animated sessions, in which the majority of the workers' deputies intervened, the Reichstag approved the Bill of Exclusion on October 19th by 221 votes to 149. Two days later its measures were being put into practice.

Social-democracy, as far as the State was concerned, became

little more than a clandestine organisation. The principal journal of the German Workers' Socialist Party, the *Vorwärts*, published in Leipzig, was banned, together with the rest of the working-class Press. The police dissolved all the proletarian associations, both cultural and political, and mass imprisonments and banishments followed. But though Bismarck believed that he had triumphed, he forgot that the Social-democrats could say, with the Christians in the Catacombs, "We have not been buried; rather have we been sown."

It was not until 1890 that Social-democracy threw off the Bismarckian yoke. The appalling difficulties of those twelve intervening years, however, were to be the prologue to a magnificent Socialist renaissance in the political life of Germany.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE DECLINE AND FALL OF OTTO VON BISMARCK

THE TRANSFORMATION of the Reich into an industrial State was responsible for many victims, and the proletariat, with no official or Trades Union protection against capitalist exploitation, became increasingly hostile to the Government. Clandestine journals, mostly of a Socialist character, were passed from hand to hand, and were avidly read. By way of a safety-valve against revolutionary pressure, Bismarck introduced various social measures of minor importance, including a system of workers' insurance against accidents. That these measures were dictated by a fear of Social-democracy is clear from the Chancellor's own confession in the Reichstag, in November 1884: "If there were no Socialist Party," he said, "nor a large number of people who fear it, not even the rare advances which have been made in our social reform would have been attempted."

Among Social-democrats the palliative reforms of the Prussian autocrat were assessed at their true value, and with a few exceptions the militant Socialists greeted his change of front with scepticism. The leaders of the workers' movement knew that the old fox was preparing another of those artful stratagems for which he was so famous. But human innocence is boundless, and there was no lack of Socialists to fall into the trap. These ingenuous folk discovered in Bismarck's social projects an evidence of goodwill towards Social-democracy, when, it need hardly be said, the exact opposite was the case. Hasenclever and Blos both made speeches in the Reichstag, in which they hinted at a *rapprochement* with Bismarck, asking, first of all, for the cessation of the state of

siege resulting from the anti-Socialist law, and intending subsequently to demand the repeal of that famous piece of legislation. Bismarck reminded them, however, that he could not covenant with members of a Party hostile to the State, a Party whose clandestine organ, the *Sozialdemokrat*, was furiously attacking the Government. On Vollmar's resignation of the directorship of this paper he had been succeeded by Eduard Bernstein, a Bank employee of undoubted talent, who was later to become one of the most outstanding theorists of German Socialism, and who changed the policy of the Socialist organ into a revolutionary one. Hasenclever and Blos both refused, however, to allow it to become the official journal of a disorganised Social-democracy, and this gave rise to a serious internecine conflict within the Party. A Conference was arranged, and in August 1882 the Socialist groups of the Reichstag, the editorial and administrative staff of the *Sozialdemokrat*, and ex-deputies, like Bebel, who had been defeated in the elections, met in Zurich. One of the most important decisions of the meeting was to convene a Party Congress abroad. This took place on March 29th, 1883, in Copenhagen, and was attended by sixty delegates from all parts of Germany. It was an exclusively doctrinal Congress. If the law against the Socialists had confirmed the majority of the militant members in their ideals, it had also brought some of their weaker brethren to despair. The Congress rejected the supposedly social reforms of Bismarck, agreeing never to renounce any Socialist claim, and to maintain their principles intact. Socialist theories were interpreted in a very varied manner, just as they are today, and while there were no bold expositions of the Socialist creed, there was no lack of fresh pens to write for Socialism. It was about this time that the preliminary skirmishes took place of that great battle which was shortly afterwards to be fought between the Marxists and revisionists. Kautski, a young Czech, and the son of an actress, Minna, as famous for her Socialist writings as for her work in the theatre, was just beginning his career as a Socialist theoretician. He studied in the Lycée and University of Vienna, and at the age of twenty-nine founded, in Stuttgart, the *Neue Zeit*, a review which was soon respected for its scientific outlook, and which advanced the theories of Marx and Engels without recognising them as dogma. Ludwig Viereck was editing in Munich another weekly publication, *Das Recht auf Arbeit*, while Bernstein was filling the pages of the *Sozialdemokrat* with practical advice for the conquest of political rights by the proletariat. The ranks of Social-democratic theorists were growing rapidly.

The Chancellor was indefatigable. He had outlawed Social-democracy *sine die*. But historic reality was too strong for him;

repression cannot remain effective for ever, as was clearly seen in the October elections of 1884, when the Socialist Party won twenty-four seats. The Trades Unions had been destroyed, the Socialist leaders exiled, the workers' Press banned. And yet . . . Bismarck roared with fury. In some provinces a state of war existed.

There followed the famous septennate elections of 1887. Bismarck wished to introduce, in the spring of the following year, a seven-year military budget, to increase it by 23 million marks, and to enlarge the Army by 40,000 men. The Reichstag, however, was only ready to legislate for a three-year Budget, and was thereupon dissolved by the Chancellor. Bismarck claimed that a victory of the Opposition would be followed by a French declaration of war on an unarmed Germany, and Government posters depicted French soldiers carrying off the cattle of the German peasants. There was, of course, no danger of war; for the Chancellor, however, there was a grave danger of peace—a danger that the German Army should not become that tremendous force with which he was trying to frighten the whole world, and in particular the "white French dove". The elections were carried out in February 1887, under terrorist conditions, as a result of which the Conservatives were returned by a large majority.

The victorious Chancellor took advantage of his electoral success to exploit the masses unreservedly. The new Parliament approved the septennate, increased taxes on brandy and sugar by 100 million marks and 40 million marks a year respectively, and on the motion of the National-Liberals prolonged the life of Parliament from three to five years. The period of the anti-Socialist law was extended to September 30th, 1890, by 164 votes to 80.

But the Chancellor's star was setting. On March 9th, 1888, Wilhelm I, that militarist who had surpassed even Bismarck—if such a thing were possible—in his hatred of Social-democracy, died, leaving the throne to his invalid son. The new Emperor, Friedrich, came to the throne with the reputation of a Liberal. During the ninety-nine days of his reign his illness prevented him from taking part in affairs of State; nevertheless he took the opportunity of showing himself to be an enemy of the anti-Socialist laws.

Wilhelm II, son of Friedrich and grandson of Wilhelm I, succeeded to the throne at the age of twenty-nine. He was an impressionable young man, psychologically resembling his grandfather rather than his father. Something of a mystic, he was, like Bismarck, an enemy of the Social-democratic movement. But he proposed to fight it with different weapons. When the miners of the Rhineland and Westphalia, 90,000 in all, declared a strike,

the Emperor received a delegation of the men and expressed his satisfaction that the strike was not a Social-democratic movement, "for", said he, "Social-democracy is for me the enemy of the Fatherland and the Empire." It was Wilhelm's policy to set himself up as a protector of the working classes. "No one", he let it be understood, "is more desirous than I that the proletariat should obtain their rights." The essential difference between the new Emperor and his grandfather, however, lay in their attitude to Bismarck. The Chancellor must have realised at his first meeting with the Emperor that his day was nearly over.

In January 1890 the Reichstag repealed the law against Social-democracy. The situation of the Socialists had changed; while Bismarck had attempted to destroy Social-democracy by a campaign of terror, the Emperor believed that the best way of dealing with the Party was to steal its thunder by acceding, within all possible limits, to the demands of the workers.

The previous year an International Socialist Congress had been held in Paris, a Congress which had acquired considerable importance not only on account of the number of delegates present, but also because it was there that the International was created and the most complete programme known to history for the protection of the workers drawn up. This programme was placed on the agenda in every country, for the Governments, in general, were beginning to realise that the proletariat could not remain for ever unprotected against capitalist exploitation. The Swiss Government was ahead of everyone, even of the Socialist Congress, in this matter, and on March 15th, 1889, it sent a circular to all the industrial States of Europe proposing a Conference in 1890 to consider the whole question of working-class rights. After the Socialist Congress in Paris, the Governments decided to accept the Swiss proposal. The first to reply was Wilhelm II, who showed a singular interest in the matter. Not content with merely agreeing to the proposal, he went farther, and asked the Swiss Government for permission to convene the Conference himself, thus letting it appear that he was the author of the scheme. Under the presidency of Wilhelm II, therefore, the German Government met, with Bismarck at its head, and decided to call a Conference of the principal industrial States in order to come to an agreement on working conditions, and to decide on the necessary measures to be taken. In the minutes of that Cabinet meeting it is stated:

> "His Majesty identifies himself with this policy and believes that it is essential to show the working-people that the Government desires their well-being with all its heart."

The Kaiser was perhaps not a little influenced by the fact that at the time the first elections of his reign were being held. The workers had no better friend than the Emperor—the workers, but not Social-democracy. The elections were held on February 20th, 1890, and a fortnight before this a royal decree was published promising a continuation of working-class protection, and convening an International Conference in Berlin for March 15th.

Social-democracy made ready to settle accounts with Bismarck and the Government parties. Rarely had the economic and psychological situation been so favourable; the Socialist Party and the Trades Unions were being rapidly reformed, while Bismarck's power was on the wane. And in spite of the fact that Wilhelm's promises had been made known before the elections, with the object of splitting the Socialist vote, Social-democracy won thirty-five seats in the Reichstag. The Emperor's bluff had been called. On the other hand, the Cartel Parties were defeated, Conservatives and National-Liberals losing eighty-five seats. The Chancellor was mad with rage; was this to be the result of his twenty years' struggle against Social-democracy? But he made his plans. And approaching Wilhelm with the timidity of one who realises that he has suffered a setback, he placed them before the Emperor. A Socialist victory is intolerable; what is to happen to the Empire? There is nothing for it but to pass a new law against Social-democracy and to increase the Army by 80,000 men. . . . Bismarck also demanded the cancellation of the elections, the dissolution of the Reichstag, and the formation of a Government majority with the help of the Catholic Centre Party. In order to win over this Party he promised to repeal the remaining laws against the Jesuits. But all in vain. Bismarck had clashed too many times with the Kaiser, and the latter wanted to make his own terms with Social-democracy. And so this Iron Chancellor, this architect of a powerful Empire who had deemed himself indispensable to its welfare, met his doom. An arrogant absolutist, his resignation meant far more than the mere relinquishing of a Government post; it was equivalent to an abdication. Never could he, Otto von Bismarck, the right arm of the German monarchy, have foreseen that he would thus be cast into utter darkness by a harsh and malignant fate.

CHAPTER NINE

CONFLICTS OF DOCTRINE WITHIN THE SOCIAL-DEMOCRATIC PARTY

THE REPEAL of the laws against Social-democracy did not, of course, end the difficulties of German Socialism. Twelve years of the practice of police repression had accustomed the authorities to see an enemy in every Socialist. But Bismarck had inflicted injuries on the Socialists rather than on Socialism. He had destroyed homes, ruined hopes and cut short the lives of men in their prime. In spite of everything, however, the elections of February 1890 had clearly shown that this Prussian Goliath could not kill the David of Socialism. At the time of the proclamation of the anti-Socialist law there were forty-two Social-democratic journals in Germany; after its repeal the number rose to sixty, with 254,100 subscribers. In 1878 the Trades Unions had a membership of 50,000 with fourteen journals, while by 1890 these numbers had risen to 201,000 and forty-one respectively. During this period Social-democracy increased its membership by more than a million and had become the strongest political organisation in Germany. It owned its own doctrinal review, *Die Neue Zeit*, with 2,500 subscribers. And for the first time groups of women, groups as small as they were enthusiastic, joined the great German Socialist movement.

From the doctrinal or theoretical point of view, the position of Social-democracy towards the end of the nineteenth century was somewhat ambiguous. Let us consider, for example, the Erfurt programme. Gotha, as we have already seen, was a compromise. But of that programme, which Marx criticised so severely, there is no trace in Erfurt. At Gotha concessions were made to the Lassallite ideology; at Erfurt genuine Marxist theories were put forward. Social-democracy had attained its majority. These were the halcyon days of Kautski, Bebel, Liebknecht, Kampfmeyer. The authors of the Erfurt programme, which the commentaries of Kautski and Bruno Schönlauk were to make famous, bore carefully in mind Marx's implacable criticism of its Gotha predecessor. It would, indeed, have been difficult for them to have incurred the same mistakes as those resulting from the need for union in 1875. There were signs at Erfurt of a desire to present the Party with a complete programme. Theoretical points concerning bourgeois society, the nature of the State, the form of capitalist production and the class struggle, were carefully drawn up. It was stated in the Erfurt programme, in accordance with Marx's

doctrines, that "the struggle of the working classes against capitalist exploitation is necessarily a political struggle. The proletariat cannot transfer the means of production to the community without being in possession of political power." The Erfurt programme stopped there, however. It did not repeat Marx's statement in his criticism of the Gotha programme, concerning the democratic ideas of Lassalle, that the conquest of political power is the first step from capitalism to Socialism, a process which necessitates a revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat.

The Congress of Erfurt in October 1891 must be considered, however, as an important theoretic milestone in the history of German Social-democracy. There were few subsequent Congresses in which doctrinal matters of interest were not discussed. In November 1892 another National Congress was held in Berlin, a Congress which was important on account of the discussions of State Socialism which took place therein. Wilhelm II was persisting with his celebrated formula: "Let us construct Socialism and the workers will desert Social-democracy." The Government of Caprivi, in agreement with the Kaiser, became attached to the idea of social legislation, and even began to talk of the establishment of "a State Socialism". In other words, the Government hoped to replace private capitalism in certain industries, with the idea of stealing the thunder of the Socialist Party, an absurd expedient which could not possibly succeed. At the Berlin Congress the following statement was read: "Social-democracy has never rejected any State measures which might favour the proletariat in the present economic system. Nevertheless, Social-democracy looks on these decisions as small advances which in no circumstances must prejudice its attempts to build up a Socialist State and society. For Social-democracy—a revolutionary organisation—State Socialism is conservative. Social-democracy and State Socialism are therefore two irreconcilable terms."

The foregoing statement is undoubtedly open to question. The Emperor's idea was to experiment in State Capitalism rather than Socialism. The hostile attitude of Social-democracy to the bourgeoisie is interesting. Lassalle would unhesitatingly have taken up a position in accordance with his policy of Halbheiten or "Half-and-half", but German Social-democracy rejected such a compromise.

. . . . . .

At Erfurt, as we have seen, Social-democracy was defined. Each leader kept faithful watch over the principles of the Party. But when unity seemed nearest, Bernstein, writing from exile in London, created a disturbance in the Party, and by his revisionist

attitude began a series of historical polemics which were to be of long duration.

Bernstein, who had been sentenced to some years of imprisonment, had sought refuge in London, where, far removed from German struggles and considerably influenced by English political and social conditions, he set himself to criticise the conceptions of Karl Marx. In the *Neue Zeit* he published a series of articles under the title of "Problems of Socialism", in which he rejected the theory of surplus value, and maintained that Marx had exaggerated the rhythm of capitalist development. He asserted that the final victory of Socialism would be achieved not by a political catastrophe, but by a gradual social process. Socialism, he said, would triumph, not through revolution but evolution. He contended that the immediate task of Social-democracy was to fight for the political rights of the working classes, to take part in municipal activities and to create economic proletarian organisations. For Bernstein the end was nothing, the movement everything. He consequently reached the conclusion that Social-democracy must be a democratic Socialist and Reformist Party.

Bernstein's articles did not at first create any sensation among the Social-democrats, but as they became more widely known a strong feeling of hostility made itself felt against the revisionist. Learning that Kautski and other Socialists intended to settle accounts with him at the Stuttgart Congress of 1898, Bernstein wrote a long defence of his attitude, declaring that he was afraid of being misunderstood. At the Stuttgart Congress—one of the most fruitful and interesting of all those held by Social-democracy —Bebel, who, it need hardly be said, did not share Bernstein's point of view, read the defence of the intrepid revisionist. Bebel was followed by Kautski, who began by expressing surprise that Bernstein should deal with questions on which there could be no disagreement. "Social-democracy", he said, "will do everything possible to carry out democratic and economic reforms and to organise the proletariat. And", he continued, "Bernstein has a completely false idea of the Party. He believes that we are contemplating a clash with armed authority, and that development will not be so rapid as many suppose. This is a question of temperament, not of viewpoints. Bernstein believes that social development will henceforth be carried out peaceably. Not, of course, without struggle, but without any great catastrophes. The proletariat is daily obtaining more and more rights, and gaining economic power by virtue of the Trades Union movement, through its influence in Municipal administration, and the creation of Co-operatives, etc. Socialist production will therefore supersede

Capitalist production, until one day we shall achieve a Socialist society. . . . Bernstein has based his theories on a study of British progress. But in Great Britain the Trades Unions have not yet become Socialist; they are under the influence of the Liberal bourgeoisie. If the British working class encouraged an independent Socialist policy, the bourgeoisie would turn on the proletariat and put an end to all peaceful development. German Liberalism has for some time given up its earlier democratic pretensions. No longer is there any talk of an extension of popular rights, or of the increase of the rights of coalition, but rather of *coups d'état*, of abolition of electoral rights, and of imprisonment. The triumph of democracy in Germany will only be achieved through the victory of the proletariat. The struggle for democracy must be fought not by the side of the bourgeoisie but against the bourgeoisie. No-one can say whether or not this battle will end in catastrophe. Social-democracy can only carry on the struggle if it has faith in itself. And it must be fought on the ground indicated not by Bernstein but by circumstances."

This was undoubtedly a fine speech of Kautski's. Revisionism, however, was not defeated. Bernstein published his thesis in a volume which appeared in 1899, entitled *The Premises of Socialism and the Tasks of Social-democracy*. Both this publication and the report of the Congress debates excited considerable comment in the Party, and theoretical problems were given prominence in the Socialist organisations and Press. Rosa Luxemburg, a highly strung, sensitive woman of slender frame and high intelligence, who was later to meet a tragic end, wrote a series of articles under the title of "Social Reform or Revolution", in which she attacked Bernstein's attitude.

The German Press in general was not indifferent to the heated discussions within the Social-democratic Party. Neither did Brentano hesitate to remark that Bernstein had brilliantly endorsed everything with which the bourgeois economists reproached Marxism.

The Congress of Hanover opened in a stormy atmosphere. The agenda was reduced to one item, a reply to revisionism; it was essential to confront and defeat Bernstein. Kautski held his peace, and the brunt of the debate was borne by Augustus Bebel, who spoke for five hours, like one possessed. He maintained that the Party did not represent any especial dogma, since its programme had been changed three times within thirty years. "The theory that there is a 'bronze law of wages', that work is the source of all wealth, and that the bourgeoisie is reactionary, was abandoned by us some time ago. We have also recovered from the illusion that State-aided Co-operatives are the means of liberating the

working classes. Bernstein's writings lack precision and clearness. The only clear thing about them is that he rejects the fundamentals of Marxism, since he attacks the materialist conception of history, dialectics, the theory of value, and the theory of maximum misery and collapse.

"What Darwin has discovered in the history of nature, what he has asserted concerning the laws of biological process, has been applied by Marx to human society and its progress. Marx, in fact, has discovered the laws of social development. This means that he did not believe that it was possible to pass through specific phases of social development by means of arbitrary revolutions. According to the materialist conception of history, the economic structure of society is the basis of the State, and is a fundamental in all political and social movements, and even in the spiritual life of the people. It would have been better from the point of view of polemical objectives if Bernstein, in attacking the materialist conception of history, had brought forward some evidence to prove the falsity of this theory. But in the whole of his book there is not one atom of reality."

By making use of data from Marx's enemies and the bourgeois economists, Bebel showed that Bernstein's theories were untenable. He ended his well-documented speech with these words: "Up to now we see no reason to change our point of view, our tactics or our name. We remain what we were."

Bebel was followed on the platform by Dr. David, one of the intellectuals who marched under the "Half-and-Half" banner, and unquestionably one of those who in a quiet and inconspicuous way wielded a considerable influence on Social-democratic policy. Dr. David was no revisionist, or at least he was not known as such. But neither was he a Marxist, nor did he wish to appear to be one. According to him, there was something positive in Bernstein' proposition which could be used to advantage. "Bernstein says that it is a mistake", said David, "to hope to obtain political power first and economic power afterwards. But the contrary is also false. Both should be achieved simultaneously; only thus will the desired end be obtained." David showed Bernstein's phrase, "What is known as the 'final objective' is nothing to us; the movement is everything", in a new light. Towards the end of his speech he accurately defined reformism or revisionism. "Let us raise the oriflamme of hope," he said, "not only towards a better future, but above all towards a more humane present."

The doctrinal debates of the Congress of Hanover lasted three and a half days. The following resolution, the theoretical position of which will be examined later, was approved by 216 votes to 21:

"The development of bourgeois society forces the Party to maintain its basic conceptions.

"The Party is, today as yesterday, involved in the class struggle, and in accordance with the rules of this struggle the emancipation of the working classes must be effected by the workers themselves, the conquest of political power, with the object of creating—with its assistance and by the socialisation of the means of production and exchange—the greatest possible well-being for all, being considered as the historic task of the proletariat.

"In order to attain this end the Party must make use of every method which is compatible with its ideas. Without having any illusions concerning the essential character of the bourgeois parties as representatives and instruments of social order and of the State, the Socialist Party does not refuse circumstantial collaboration with them, while at the same time it makes every attempt to strengthen itself, to increase the political rights and liberties of the people, to improve the social position of the working classes and to fight for the encouragement of popular education. But the Party remains absolutely independent, and considers any success which may be obtained merely as a step nearer the desired end.

"As regards the foundation of Co-operatives, the Party proclaims its neutrality. It considers the foundation of such Co-operatives, in principle, an appropriate method of improving the economic situation of its members. It also considers them, as it considers all proletarian organisations for the guarantee and furtherance of the workers' interests, an efficient means of educating the working classes and giving them autonomy in their own affairs. Nevertheless, the Socialist Party does not concede decisive importance to the Co-operatives in the matter of liberating the working classes from wage-earning slavery.

"The Party persists in its policy of fighting against militarism. It ratifies its international policy, directed towards the fraternisation of the peoples, and especially of the proletariat of the different nations, and entrusts the task of solving cultural problems to a general federation.

"As can be seen, there is no reason whatsoever why the Party should change its principles, its tactics or its name, in order to become a democratic-socialist and reformist community. Its position in respect of the State, society and the bourgeois parties cannot therefore be altered."

Neither the Congress of Stuttgart nor that of Hanover was able to kill revisionism, which had pervaded every stratum of German

Social-democracy. The result of the voting on the foregoing resolution showed unmistakably that there existed within the Party a compact reformist group, impermeable to revolutionary ideas. Neither Kautski, nor Bebel, nor Rosa Luxemburg could convince the Bersteinites, and the Party could not or would not defend itself against the revisionist tendency. Kautski was under the illusion that he controlled the vast apparatus of Social-democracy from his house in Berlin, but the real manipulator was in fact Bernstein. Kautski himself, whom the Italian Socialists had nicknamed "the Pope of the International", was as near to Bernstein in tactics as he was far removed from him in theory. Indeed, Bernstein must often have thought, even if he never actually said: "Though you do not accept my theories, you are certainly guided by them."

In the year 1931 Hermann Müller, one of the Presidents of the Social-democratic Party, died in Berlin. His body was placed in the courtyard of the *Vorwärts* building, where members of the Reichsbanner kept constant vigil. From one of the windows of the building I watched the ceremony of homage, which was attended by all the outstanding figures of Social-democracy. Before it began, an old man, paralysed from the waist downwards, was carried in to a seat in the front. As he was borne past the waiting crowd, all heads were uncovered. That mummified figure was Eduard Bernstein. Shortly afterwards he died—like Dr. David, at an advanced age. Had they both lived a few months longer they might have been buried side by side with Social-democracy itself.

CHAPTER TEN

THE GERMAN EAGLE SETS OUT ON ITS FLIGHT

THE CAPITALIST development of Germany continued on its relentless way, and the Empire marched rapidly towards catastrophe. By 1900 appeared the fatal writing on the wall, visible, however, only to the most intelligent members of the German community. Maximilian Harden—Germany's "*enfant terrible*", as Isiard called him—scourged the *camarilla* of royal advisers, but the prison doors soon closed on him, as they had done on so many others. The Reich began to suffocate; her confines were too narrow, and the Emperor, a pathological case of vanity and megalomania, aspired to a world-wide Empire. But he was nothing more than the tool of the great capitalists; that fierce moustache, those ferocious gestures, were merely the outward and visible disguise of an inward and spiritual weakness. The indus-

trial and landowning bourgeoisie knew very well how to exploit the temperamental qualities of their monarch.

An historic event of the time was the appointment of Tirpitz to the Permanent Under-Secretaryship of the Admiralty. Alfred von Tirpitz wore an apostle's beard, but he was the spirit of war incarnate. Torpedo-boats and submarines were toys for his delight, and he was a diabolical danger to the peace of Europe. But the Empire could not have found a better instrument for its purpose, nor the Emperor a more impassioned advocate of naval armament.

With Tirpitz in the Admiralty, German armament, particularly in the naval sphere, increased by geometrical progression. Tirpitz's one ambition was to build a powerful fleet: cruisers, torpedo-boats, submarines and battle-ships were constructed with all possible speed. The new Navy Act required the sum of 997 million marks a year for a period of six years, while the annual expenditure on warships increased from 83 to 142 million marks. At the same time, Army expenditure increased from 372 to 602 million marks a year. A general war budget was also proposed. Both the Army and the Navy were battening on the nation, and the Reich debts increased from 500 million marks in 1885 to 2,261 millions in 1897—a fantastic figure which represented a tremendous drain on the resources of the State. The expansionist policy of the Empire could not, of course, be successful without a powerful Navy. German trade frequently clashed with British, and Germany was doing her best to acquire naval bases in every sea. Accordingly in 1899 she acquired, for 16 million marks, the Marianas and Carolinas, the Palau and Samoan Islands. Tirpitz's plan, repeatedly expressed, was to protect German commerce on every possible occasion, and to defend the colonial interests of the Reich. It was his ambition to be able to say, parodying the old Yankee slogan, "Wherever there's a Reichsmark there's the Fleet."

Capitalism was making rapid strides; from 1882 to 1895 the number of large factories increased by 6 per cent., and the workers employed in large industry by 39·9 per cent. In spite of the growing industrial prosperity, however, business undertakings strove to reduce the standard of living of the proletariat. In the clothing industry, employers gained power over the lives of entire families by means of a system of home-labour, for wages which were barely enough to cover vital needs. Industrial groups—Cartels and Trusts—were formed, and production quotas established in order to maintain prices. At the same time Germany's trade balance was strengthened by an increase in exports, which by 1892 were worth 3,150 million marks and by 1897 4,106 million marks.

Agriculture, on the other hand, was not sufficiently developed for the needs of the nation—the natural consequence of converting the Reich into an industrial factory. If we study the trade statistics for 1897 we see that raw materials to the value of 2,170 million marks and food to the value of 1,790 million marks were imported. Nevertheless, the landowners were demanding higher tariffs on wheat, cattle, etc. The protectionist policy persisted, intensified by a capitalism which had become the master of German destinies, and between 1887 and 1897 annual Customs receipts had increased from 379·9 million marks to 715 million marks—that is to say, an annual increase in indirect taxes of 16·26 marks per head.

Capitalism dragged everybody into its vortex, and the policy of indirect taxes scandalised even the Conservatives themselves. When, in 1895, Prince Hohenlohe replaced Caprivi as Premier, he was forced, as a landowner, to counter the strong protectionist tendencies of his class. The bourgeoisie were in the full flush of their power, and felt strong enough to rebel against the State. In Prussia, for instance, when the profits tax was raised to 4 per cent., the large capitalists launched a furious campaign against the increase, referring to the tax as a "confiscation of property". They were completely indifferent, however, to the 8 per cent. tax on wages, and every increase in indirect charges they considered as a patriotic measure, and from their point of view, of course, they were right.

In the Reichstag Social-democracy was faced with a strong majority which rejected every attempt to alter the existing state of affairs. As though it were not enough that there was a united bourgeois front in Parliament, the right of association of the workers was refused, or at least was made the object of certain conditions. The police saw to it that a very careful watch was kept on workers' meetings.

In the meantime the Junkers and industrialists were bringing pressure to bear on the Government to abolish general electoral rights. The graph of industrial exports rose steadily; the stronger it became the more demands it made of the Emperor. It could not, however, be content with the markets at its disposal, and the Kaiser, who was already dreaming of world dominion, was quite ready to support it in its bid for further conquests. And so the German eagle spread his wings and flew towards Asia.

The Emperor and his minions had come to the conclusion that Germany's colonial possessions in the south-west of Africa, the Cameroons, Togoland, New Guinea, etc., were not enough for a powerful Empire. In all, the area of these colonies was about

1,015,000 square miles, or roughly five times that of the Reich. In 1895, Germany, Russia and Great Britain supported Japan in her war against China, and helped the Japanese to a decisive victory. After the war they decided to make further demands on China, and in 1897 the nations universally considered to be the torch-bearers of civilisation launched another attack on that unhappy country, dismembering, subduing and humiliating her. Without obtaining the consent of the Chinese Government, the Great Powers decided to place European troops in Peking—with the object, it was said, of protecting their respective nationals, although what they really intended to do was to incite a rebellion and make it the pretext for subduing the native population. With the entry of European soldiers into Peking, feeling ran high, and the German Minister was shot by a Chinese soldier. The news fell on German ears like a bomb-shell; the Nationalists demanded that China should be obliterated, and in his farewell speech to the troops the Kaiser, whose unbridled temper was abnormal even in a man of his temperament, said: "No quarter must be given, nor prisoners taken. Shoot in such a way that never again in a thousand years will a Chinese dare to look brazenly at a German!"

Count von Waldersee obtained permission to direct operations against the mutineers, thus becoming a kind of Welt-Marschall. The European troops were therefore commanded by a member of the nation which, of all the Great Powers at Peking, had the least interests to defend in China.

The Chinese Army had practically no war materials; its only weapon was a passion for independence. In these circumstances it was not long before victory favoured the Allies, and the European soldiers had soon drowned the Nationalist rising in blood. It is true to say that of all the nations engaged in this inglorious campaign no Power acted so savagely as Germany. The events of the war against China represent a glorious page in the annals of Chinese history, but in the records of European Imperialism, and above all of German Cæsarism, they are a shameful blot which can never be effaced.

The result of this expedition, as far as Germany was concerned, was the "leasing" of the Peninsula of Kiau-Tschou to the Reich for ninety-nine years. At last the German flag flew in the Far East.

But the Chinese massacre was not sufficient to appease Wilhelm's insatiable vanity and blood-lust. China was made to pay the cost of the expedition, to execute a large number of her officials and generals, and to raise a monument in memory of the murdered Ambassador. And as though this were not enough, the Kaiser

ordered that a Chinese prince should go to Germany and do public obeisance at his feet.

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The horrors of the German repression in China, however, were as nothing to those of West Africa in 1906. The colonising ability to which the Nationalists doubtless alluded when, after the last war, they demanded the return of the German colonies, was to result, on the one hand, in a heroic rebellion, and on the other in one of the most inhuman and widespread massacres of the many which must be laid to the account of Imperialist capitalism. In 1906 some 80,000 Herreros, a native race of peaceful cattle-breeders living in the African veldt, and 10,000 members of the warlike tribe of Hottentots, rose in rebellion against the cruelty, exploitation and robbery of the German colonial administrators. 14,000 German troops, with General Trotha at their head, were sent to subdue the mutineers. The Germans behaved with unheard-of brutality; General Trotha, a good disciple, or perhaps even a mentor, of Wilhelm II, gave orders that no prisoners should be taken. The men were shot as soon as they were captured, and the women and children were sent into the desert, where 10,000 of them died of hunger and exhaustion on the burning African sands.

Rivalry between British and German trade increased. Tirpitz watched it closely; he also watched England, who in 1911, on the occasion of the Agadir incident, was to proclaim that in the event of German aggression against France, she would support the latter. For Germany the die had been cast. And the mistake made by the Kaiser's *camarilla*, in which Tirpitz held an honoured place, lay in believing that with the construction of a gigantic navy Germany would be able to avoid an armed conflict, or that in the last resort she would be able to come through it victoriously.

Germany's insane armament policy was gravely injurious to German economy. Germany had declared a tariff war—inevitably the forerunner of a military one—on the whole world. The Reich was therefore practising Imperialism in its two forms: a policy of furious arming combined with unlimited protection.

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What was the attitude of Social-democracy to this two-fold Imperialist front? During the early days of the century it would have been hard to imagine the defection of 1914. Within and without the Reichstag the Socialist Party pursued a quiet but vigorous campaign against the naval excesses of von Tirpitz; neither did the Kaiser's extravagant policy escape Socialist censure. In the Reichstag, of course, the workers' deputies did not achieve much, but they were successful in the streets. Parliament,

which was led by the Catholic Centre Party, rejected all social measures, and, as the executor of the Kaiser's policy, it was notoriously reactionary. It approved every Nationalist measure: the raising of tariff walls to unheard-of heights; the construction of more and more naval units. But the man in the street was against all this. In the elections of June 16th, 1903, Social-democracy returned eighty-one members to the Reichstag—a gain of twenty-five seats. In the 1907 elections, held after General Trotha's West African campaign, the number of Socialist seats dropped to forty-three; this did not mean a Socialist reverse, however, and was merely the result of unproportional representation, for the number of votes polled by the Party was 8·2 per cent. greater than in the 1903 elections. Social-democracy was definitely on the up-grade. It was to increase and develop until by 1914 it had become the most important Socialist organisation in the world. In 1912 it returned 110 members to the Reichstag, representing 30·9 per cent. of the total number of seats, but 34·9 per cent. of the total votes. In a system of proportional representation the Party would have won 138 seats on this occasion.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

THE EVE OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR

THE IMPERIALIST orgy of the German ruling classes, the constant threat to the few political rights which had been won by the proletariat, the opprobrious policy of Chancellor von Bülow, the Western repercussions of the Russian revolution of 1905, and the difficult international situation, were all factors inspiring the workers to revise their revolutionary strategy.

The first fourteen years of the present century was a time of exceptional uneasiness and agitation. War was approaching step by step. Reaction in Germany was as strong as the Army or the Fleet, and the most thoughtful members of the Socialist Party realised that difficult days lay ahead. In the Social-democratic Congress held in Dresden in 1903 there was talk for the first time of a revolutionary strike, a subject which was to become the burning question of the hour in all subsequent Socialist Congresses. In 1904 at Bremen; in 1905 at Jena; in 1906 at Mannheim; in 1911 at Jena once again; and in 1912 at Magdeburg, discussions were held on the possibility, effectiveness and desirability of such a strike. Rosa Luxemburg, Mehring, Parvus, Victor Adler, Hilferding, Eckstein, Kautski, Karl Liebknecht, Bebel, Karl Legien, Schmidt, Elm, all dealt with the question in their speeches and writings. Would a general revolutionary strike be of any use?

When should it be declared? What sort of relations should exist between Social-democracy and the Trades Unions? Can war be successfully prevented by means of a general strike? These were controversial matters both in Germany and in the International, which dealt with the problem at the Congresses of Stuttgart (1907), Copenhagen (1910) and Basilea (1912).

The International contended that a general revolutionary strike, as long as it is not abused or directed from an anarchist standpoint, can be effective. In order to prevent war, the proletariat of every country must adopt the attitude which they consider most appropriate and desirable in the particular circumstances.

The positions of the various German Social-democrats were as follows:

Bebel: "A political strike of the masses is not merely a theoretical question, but a practical one; it is a method of struggle which must be employed. Indispensable conditions for the triumph of a general revolutionary strike are a strong organisation and revolutionary discipline."

Legien (reorganiser and leader of the Trades Union): "There are no differences between the Party and the Trades Unions; still less could there be any in respect of this matter. We are all in agreement that at certain times it is essential to have recourse to every method at our disposal. If a general strike is necessary the Trades Unions will be in the front rank."

Rosa Luxemburg: "In certain circumstances a general strike is a necessary revolutionary instrument for a Socialist Party. I think that it would be effective, and even sufficient to achieve general electoral rights in Prussia."

Karl Liebknecht's attitude was similar to that of Rosa Luxemburg.

Elm: "It is essential to propagate amongst the workers the idea of a general revolutionary strike, and to get them to realise that the time is coming when we must enter the lists and fight for our lives. Let us prepare for this moment."

Robert Schmidt: "I doubt if it will be possible to bring about a general revolutionary strike."

Kautski: "Let us strengthen our organisations and educate the proletariat. In order to overthrow the bourgeoisie we must use exhausting tactics."

The Party: "If the Executive Committee considers that the situation demands a general revolutionary strike, it will get into contact with the General Commission of Trades Unions and will adopt the necessary measures to achieve the desired victory." [1]

[1] Congress of Mannheim, 1906.

Fundamentally this controversy was something more than a mere discussion of a theoretical and tactical point. Those Party members who insisted on the examination of the question at the various Congresses were all on the Left wing of Social-democracy.

As a consequence of these debates the Party reaffirmed its doctrine. It was a class Party, and remarkable for its solidarity with foreign revolutionary groups. The Russian Socialists, for instance, who had been partially crushed by the Stolypin repression following the 1905 revolution, were given the sum of RM.307,399 by German Social-democracy.

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It has been said that in 1914 nobody "believed" in the war. This is quite possible. But on the other hand did anyone "believe" in peace? Only a blind man could have failed to see the cloud of dust raised by the horses of Attila. The Balkan troubles had disturbed the whole of Europe. The Agadir incident between Germany and France, and the consequent protest on the part of Great Britain; the friction between Austria and Serbia concerning the latter's access to the Adriatic; the Russian ultimatum to Persia and the despatch of 4,000 Russian troops to Teheran—an incident which aroused British anger; the tense relations between Germany and Great Britain as a result of Tirpitz's naval policy: all these were alarm signals which should not on any account have been ignored. Secret diplomacy was spreading a network of intrigues over Europe, and the people were told only what the diplomats wanted them to be told. The German Socialist deputies demanded from the Reichstag a reform of that part of the Constitution which confers on irresponsible oligarchies instead of on Parliament the right to decide questions of war and peace. They were unsuccessful, however, in this matter, as in many others of equal importance. And the Emperor, "tired of Parliamentarism", said in one of his characteristic speeches, in August 1911, that he was not dependent in the slightest degree on Parliament, nor on popular assemblies, nor on national resolutions. "I, Heaven's chosen instrument," he said, "am responsible for my actions to God and myself alone." A year previously, the Junker von Oldenburg-Januschau had risen in the Reichstag to give his opinion that "the King of Prussia and Emperor of Germany must at all times have the necessary powers to be able to say to an Army lieutenant, 'Get hold of ten men and close the Reichstag.' " The voice of the Kaiser harmonised admirably with that of his *camarilla*.

The Press of heavy industry was not ignorant of the turn which events were taking in European Chancelleries, and began to prepare for the battle. Its task was to add fuel to the flame which should

cause the final explosion. For the armament industry the situation was excellent; every country was feverishly arming for the coming conflict. Nevertheless, profits had not reached the fantastic heights which might have been expected, and some outlet had to be found for all the armaments which were being accumulated by the various nations—only thus would sufficient gold pour into the coffers of the Krupps and the Schneiders. But the blacksmith at his forge, the engine-driver on his footplate, the ship's stoker toiling beneath the load-line, knew little of all this. They knew something, however. It is an open question whether the facts at the disposal of the proletariat warned them to be on the defensive. In 1912 the French and German Socialist deputies appealed to their respective Governments and proposed, almost on the same day, a policy of disarmament and of Franco-German *rapprochement*. But in vain; no one was able to prevent the war. Great Britain could perhaps postpone it, by announcing in time that she would not be neutral, but that was all. The Kaiser, the Chauvinistic Press, and the Chancelleries of Berlin, Vienna, Moscow and Paris, were already burning with impatience.

As German Premier, Prince von Bülow, a sworn enemy of the workers, had been replaced by Bethmann-Hollweg, a weak and incapable politician with less resolution than Hamlet. At last the conceited Hohenzollern had found someone who was neither Bismarck, nor Caprivi, nor the Prince of Hohenlohe, nor von Bülow. Bethmann-Hollweg was unique. And in 1914 History—History and the Kaiser—needed him as Chancellor of the Reich. This man of straw resigned on one occasion, and the Emperor refused to accept his resignation. The events leading up to this incident throw light on an important phase of German history, and are therefore worthy of mention. In 1912 Lord Haldane, the British War Minister, went to Berlin in order to discuss the size of the respective German and British fleets. These negotiations, of an extraordinarily delicate nature in the circumstances, had been entrusted on the German side to von Tirpitz and the Chancellor. Wilhelm II, however, decided to intervene, and without consulting anyone, he sent a note to the German Ambassador in London, stating that Germany considered Lord Haldane's attitude as a warlike threat, and that if Great Britain transferred her fleet from the Mediterranean to the North Sea he would enlarge the German Navy. As a result of this intervention the Anglo-German negotiations fell through, and there was nothing left to the Kaiser but to proclaim his famous slogan: "*Gott mit uns.*" Unfortunately for the German Emperor, he did not realise that even God was to fail him.

It was more than forty years since the European workers had

been faced with an event of such historic dimensions as the one which was fast approaching. Would they be ready to deal with the situation? The answer is that the Socialist Parties did not prevent the war, because it was not in their power to do so.

It was the great pride of the German Socialists that they possessed the strongest workers' party in the world. In buildings, machines, land, equipment, etc., their capital in 1913 amounted to RM.21,514,546. They had a vast library, and since 1906 there had been a Socialist School, organised with the method and efficiency which the Party always devoted to enterprises of the kind. In the space of six years RM.288,575 were spent on this establishment—a magnificent subsidy for a school whose pupils were limited in numbers to thirty. The staff, all cultured and well-known Socialists, consisted of Hilferding (History of Economics and National Economy); Pannekoek (Historic Materialism and Social Theories); Mehring (History of the Political Parties); Stadthagen (Rights of the Workers, Social Legislation and Constitution); Heimann (Penal Law); Rosenfeld (Bourgeois Law); Katsenstein (Trades Union Movement, Co-operativism and Municipal Policy); Schulz (Journalist Technique). Hilferding, an Austrian, and Pannekoek, a Dutchman, were forced by the police to leave the School, and were replaced by Rosa Luxemburg and Cunow respectively. Bebel, who was nearly eighty, was not able to take an active part in these educational activities.

This was, of course, the Central Socialist School; there were others less important, but possibly no less effective, in the provinces. The Party also owned, in 1913, ninety daily papers, with a circulation of 1,353,212, and sixty-two printing-offices. The review *Neue Zeit* had 10,500 subscribers, the *Gleichheit*, the journal of the women's groups, 112,000, and the *Wahre Jacob*, a humorous publication, 371,000. There was also a Socialist news agency, which made it possible for the workers' Press to dispense with the tendentious services of bourgeois agencies.

In the various Socialist organisations (Press, Secretariat, Parliamentary minorities, propaganda sections, etc.) the following staff was employed: 267 editors, 89 office managers, 273 business officials, 140 special administrative officials, 85 propagandists, 2,640 technicians and 7,589 paid news agents.

It might have been thought that a Party which had risen so high in the realm of economics, doctrinal education and propagandist technique, would be ready to embark on historic enterprises. But as some members realised—even while they rejoiced at the progress and magnificent organisation of Social-democracy—there were tremendous risks implicit in those very advantages. Behind the powerful apparatus of Social-democracy there was a strange

impotence. Would the Party respond to the demands which would be made on it in the critical days ahead? There is no doubt that this question exercised the minds of the Left-wing *élite*, not only in Germany but in other countries as well. In Germany Mehring, one of the most perceptive of all those who influenced Social-democracy, had realised the danger, and did not hesitate to proclaim it. At the time no one believed that the Party apparatus would break down before it had even begun to function. At the most there were a few suspicions. Bureaucracy was as strong in the Trades Unions, which were necessarily obliged to recruit many officials, as in the Party. It was felt that if both groups could work together with the necessary precision, they could inflict a serious blow on the German bourgeoisie. But if they failed to do so, they must necessarily become the principal support of the capitalist régime.

CHAPTER TWELVE

THE APOSTLES OF PEACE SWEPT AWAY BY THE HURRICANE

THE SUDDEN collapse of German Social-democracy on the outbreak of war was not a chance happening. It was caused by *facts* and *ideas* rather than by the will, or lack of will, of any one leader or responsible group in the Socialist Party. Among the *facts* are the tremendous bureaucratic development of the Party, its accumulation of wealth, its character of a great enterprise, the confused ideas of the masses and of their leaders, and the brutality with which the Government, supported by the middle classes, the bourgeoisie and some of the proletariat, suppressed the slightest movement against war.

As far as *ideas* are concerned, it would be absurd to deny that they considerably increased the weakness and hesitation of Social-democratic policy. In the first place, the Party was, paradoxically, a total which did not correspond to the sum of its parts. Its general line was almost entirely Marxist, but in the realm of action it was, for a hundred different reasons, led by the spirit of Bernstein. Kautski had also begun to water down the wine of Marxism, his desire being at all costs to reconcile reformism and revolution. Wilhelm Liebknecht had died at the beginning of the century, and on Bebel's death in August 1913 Social-democracy began to drift aimlessly—the worst fate that can befall a political party. Revisionism, which had been lying hidden, suddenly made its appearance. In connection with the attitude of Social-democracy to the war of 1914, the mobilisation of Russia against Ger-

many is of interest. Whether for polemical reasons, or in obedience to a profound conviction, Augustus Bebel had stated at the Erfurt Congress of 1891, "If Russia, the enemy of all human civilisation, sheltering behind cruelty and barbarity, should attack Germany in order to tear her to pieces and devour her, we will resist the aggressor with even more energy than our country's leaders." This detail is very interesting, since Bebel had opposed Bismarck's Prussian militarism in 1871 with as much spirit as any 1914 Socialist. And in the first number of the Russian review *Socialist Democracy*, published in 1890 by Plekhanof, Engels began a long thesis on "The Foreign Policy of Czarism", by saying,

> "Since 1848 Marx has insistently pointed out to the workers' movement of Western Europe the inevitability of a war to the death against the Russian Empire. . . . This fact represents one of Marx's many merits. I am only continuing the work of my dead friend, and am doing what was impossible at the time for him to do."

The voice of Bebel was, after all, merely an echo of the voices of Marx and Engels.

> "Engels realised that this struggle was inevitable because Czarist Russia had just achieved a geographical situation of such a nature as to ensure for herself domination over Europe, and to make a victory of the European proletariat impossible."

It seemed therefore in 1914 that a Social-democratic surrender was compatible with the most orthodox Marxism. Neither Marx nor Engels nor Bebel was alive at the time. We may well ask what would have been their attitude to the first world war.

The position of a section of European, and non-German, Socialism *vis-à-vis* the 1914–1918 war shows where Marx's policy towards Russian Czarism might have led. For the Germans, this war was a defensive one against barbarising Russian Czarism. For the French and English it was a war against the no less barbarising Prussian militarism. As far as Marx's ideas are concerned, it should be remembered that Prussian despotism, as he knew it, had not arrived at the stage of excessive development which it reached in 1914.

There is hardly anything more unpopular than a strong anti-war protest when once war has made its ravages felt on the soul of a people. In 1914 the most determined pacifists were the victims of that collective frenzy which begins by attacking a few, and which spreads like an epidemic through a country. The strongest temperaments succumbed, and the most firmly-estab-

lished ideas went crashing down, like the walls of Jericho, at the sound of the war trumpets.

At the end of June Austria served an ultimatum on Serbia. Suddenly aware of their danger, the German working classes sprang to the alert. The Government had forbidden demonstrations and open-air meetings, only giving its authorisation for patriotic manifestations. The main streets were watched by the police, who repressed unmercifully any anti-war protests, but the workers met in the Trades Union headquarters behind closed doors. The German proletariat reacted as one man: thousands of hands were clenched in indignation; thousands of voices called for peace. Vigorous and aggressive, the workers massed themselves in the streets, where Chauvinist youths, poisoned by Press propaganda, were making impassioned speeches in favour of war. There were many clashes with authority, but after each police charge the workers would disperse, only to meet again in some other street or district. German workers grew hoarse with shouting; the students and sons of the bourgeoisie also lost their voices, but in their case it was through crying vengeance on Serbia. The protest of the workers was the protest of the leaders—there was no dissentient note; during the last days of peace, Social-democracy appeared to be unanimously opposed to any surrender. The *Vorwärts*, mouthpiece of the Party and of the Trades Unions, stood out firmly and courageously against war. In the meantime, Wilhelm II raged against the Socialists who opposed him, against the paper which laid the war responsibility on his shoulders, and against the workers whose demonstrations, in spite of police brutality and zeal, filled the wide avenues of the German towns.

Haase, who succeeded Bebel as leader of the Party, attended the International Congress of Brussels, where Jaurès, the great French Socialist, was proclaiming to an audience of 8,000 workers, "Our rôle is easier than that of our German comrades. We do not have to impose peace on our country, because our country wants peace. I, who have brought on myself the hatred of the Chauvinists through my desire to achieve a *rapprochement* between Germany and France, have the right to testify on behalf of my people. I hereby solemnly declare that at this moment the Government of France desires peace. The excellent British Government is seeking a means of reconciliation, and is counselling prudence and patience to Russia. But if this advice should fail, and if tomorrow Russia should take up arms, then the French workers will declare: 'We do not recognise secret treaties; all that we recognise is the public treaty with humanity and culture. . . .'

"Over and over again the valiant German Socialists have

shown us an example. Yesterday there was an end of all ambiguity, and thousands of our Berlin comrades took part in a pacifist demonstration. Never before have German workers done such a great service to humanity. Among them there were French Socialists who joined in the shout of 'Down with war!' If by mechanical force and in the intoxication of the first struggle, the absolutists should succeed in dragging the masses into a situation where misery and death appear on all sides and typhoid finishes the deadly work of the bullets, then all the Armies would turn on their Governments and would ask: 'How can you justify these heaps of corpses?' Then unchained revolution would cry, 'Begone, and pray God and men to forgive you!' But if we can calm the tempest, then the peoples must say: 'It is our task to prevent the spirits from rising every six months from their tombs to frighten the world!'

"I give thanks to the German comrades in the name of the French, and I promise that, cost what it may, we will continue to preserve them from the Attilism of the war-mongers, and will defend them unto the death."

Hugo Haase said that the German workers would do their duty against the Imperialist oligarchies. The pacifist cries which issued from the German workshops, factories, ports and mines, were taken up all over Europe. Jaurès was as pleased as a child; he felt comforted, and with sincere emotion he gave thanks to the "German comrades who had never before done such a great service to humanity". As far as these were concerned, Jaurès was certainly content. He may have had doubts of his own men, who had not made the same vigorous demonstrations, but there could be no defection in Germany. Were not Haase's words the echo of deeds, the rhetoric adorning reality? As for the French workers, Jaurès was confident that his authority and his eloquence would keep them on the right path. That is why he promised that they would continue to defend the German comrades. But it may be that he had a presentiment of the desertion of those who, like Hervé, were to abandon the Socialist ranks to the cry of "The country of the Revolution is in peril!"

The author of *L'Armée Nouvelle* had declared at Brussels: "Our rôle is easier than that of our German comrades." Why easier? The phrase, "*Aller a l'idéal et comprendre le réel*", is Jaurès' own. The leader had remembered that the Germans—unlike the French—did not have two Socialist Ministers. That, after all, was a reality. One of the most important portfolios in the French Cabinet, that of the Ministry of the Interior, was, in fact, in the hands of Malvy, a Socialist, and Viviani, the Premier, also belonged to the Party. The Socialism of both was somewhat tepid,

but all the same it was impossible to compare the French Government with the côterie of Huns presided over by the Kaiser.

In Germany the protests came to an end. The workers were even forbidden to hold meetings indoors, and once a state of war had been declared, the police prohibited all meetings. It was a dramatic situation for the workers; the *Vorwärts* alone continued, as best it could, to encourage their resistance:

> "We will not live through coming events with a fatalistic indifference; we will remain faithful to our cause, convinced of the nobility of our cultural mission. The implacable dispositions of martial law have severely injured the proletarian movement. Rash actions, useless and misunderstood martyrdoms, not only do harm to the persons concerned, but also to our cause. We ask you, then, to persevere in the face of all obstacles, until the future belongs to Socialism, which serves as a link between the peoples."

Few considered the question of a general strike. When Hervé said at the International Congress of Basilea that a mass strike would be enough of itself to prevent war, Bebel attacked him vigorously and called him a madman. And Bebel was no Bernstein, nor even a Kautski. A strike would have meant civil war. But Social-democracy, which, in a resolution of the Magdeburg Congress, had incorporated the strike weapon in its programme, was frightened of making use of it. The organisation under-estimated its strength. Could the four millions of which the Party and the Trades Union were composed, resist, even if they were united, the coercion of the State Police and of an unbounded nationalism? The Left said Yes. The revolutionary groups of the Trades Unions and the Party were consumed with impatience. Every hour brought them nearer to catastrophe. Something must be done; something on a grand scale. Within a few days nobody would be able to talk freely, there would be no Opposition Press, the workers would be at the front. . . .

But all was in vain. During the days preceding the fateful 2nd of August, the leaders of the Party were in constant session. War seemed difficult to avoid. The fact was that Social-democracy was not a revolutionary party; it was frightened by the idea of civil war. And so the huge and ponderous machinery of bureaucracy and of the Trades Unions remained motionless. What was it waiting for? Gigantic, immobile, it gave no sign of life. And without so much as firing a shot against their enemies, the Social-democrats retreated, fighting amongst themselves. "Nothing we can do", said the Socialist leaders, "will be of any use if we are not at least in agreement with our French comrades. It is

absurd to suppose that the German proletariat can parry this historic blow if they are isolated from the other European workers. It is therefore of the utmost urgency that we should begin negotiations with the workers of France, our comrades and allies." The Party commissioned Hermann Müller to seek an interview with Jaurès. But when he arrived in Paris, Jaurès had been assassinated by the young Nationalist Villain.

The master was dead. Could he possibly have prevented the war? It is hard to believe so. While Hermann Müller, after paying homage to his still-warm corpse, was in consultation with the French Socialist leaders, Germany declared war on Russia. With the German and the French Socialists there was also a Belgian comrade. Were they by chance discussing a general strike? No; the subject of their conversations was credits, and it is sad to say that they did not come to an agreement. Isolated from Germany, with all telegraphic communications severed, Müller did not know what to propose or to reply to his French comrades, but he contended that everyone, both Germans and French, should refuse to vote credits in their respective Chambers. "If Germany attacks France", answered the French, "how are we going to prevent the collection of funds to save the country?" Müller realised that his Paris comrades considered that France would be fighting a defensive war. And the French were not so stupid that they could not see, in their conversations with Müller, that the Germans looked on the war as a defensive one against Russia. The interviews came to an end, and before the first shot had been fired Hermann Müller left for Berlin. The next day Germany declared war on France.

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For two or three days the weaker members of the Social-democratic Party had been breaking ranks. In Berlin the *Vorwärts* alone preserved its tone of opposition, and in the provinces a minority of the Social-democratic journals amused themselves by exposing the defects of "the autocracy of the Russian whip". "Bloodthirsty Russian Czarism, responsible for a million crimes against culture and liberty", wanted to enslave Germany. None of these papers, however, referred to German tyranny. And with a "Down with Czarism!" they urged the masses to shoulder arms.

While these Social-democratic journals were quoting Marx and Bebel, another Party organ, the *Leipzig People's Gazette*, was firmly, though in no measure of true prophecy, exposing their fallacious arguments;

"Who dares to say that a Central European nation making war today on Russia will bring revolution to that country? . . .

The German Government's intention in invoking an antiquated ideology is to incite the German workers to fight Russia."

The *Vorwärts* wrote in the same strain.

The Kaiser's Press, however, was adding fuel to the flames of war. Germany, it said, had been invaded by Russia before the declaration of war; the French, too, had trampled on German soil. Nationalist hysteria spread throughout the country. Hermann Müller on his return from Paris gave his companions an account of his conversations with the French Socialists. ". . . Everyone recognises that the Germans have done everything possible to prevent war. The French will not abstain from voting the credits; and for France the war is not even a defensive one! *She* has not to stand up to Russian Czarism!"

History has its caprices, and in 1914 everything happened just as it did in 1870. The men were different; Social-democracy was different; but all else was the same—incredible though it may seem after the lesson which the German proletariat received in 1870, when they believed that they were fighting a defensive war. In 1914, as in 1870, the leaders of Social-democracy voted the credits; they also promised to support the war on condition that if it ceased to be a defensive one and became an instrument of conquest they would rise up against German Imperialism. "As soon as the war becomes a war of conquest", they said, "we will oppose it by the most violent methods." There is, however, one "small" difference in the attitudes of the two periods: in 1870 this promise was kept by all the Socialist leaders; in 1914 it was kept by only an insignificant minority—for a refusal on the part of six Socialist deputies (a figure subsequently increased to thirty-two) to vote credits, can hardly be termed opposition "by the most violent methods".

It is, of course, quite true that the issue was purely a moral one. Even in their firmest strongholds the German Socialists had gained only a quarter of the Parliamentary seats. Whatever they might do the credits would still be voted.

Within the Parliamentary group of Social-democracy the struggle began. The majority voted with the Chancellor. Their attitude towards a general strike was completely senseless: "If we begin a revolutionary movement", they said, "we shall probably have to take the reins of government; otherwise a civil war will be a gift to the enemy." In this attitude of the majority there is a hint of the controversy with the minority group. "A general strike may be effective. But are we prepared to seize power?" The Social-democratic minority listened stupefied. "*The enemy!*"

An overwhelming majority pronounced in favour of voting the

credits. Kautski, like Pontius Pilate, urged abstention, as was to be expected of him, but he had no supporters. The minority, some fifteen deputies, including Haase, Ledebour and Karl Liebknecht, the champion of anti-militarism, were uncompromisingly in favour of a contrary vote, but as soon as the matter came before Parliament the situation changed. The first article on the Parliamentary agenda was a credit of 5,000 million marks. The crucial moment had arrived; what would be the attitude of the 110 Socialist deputies? Not even the Opposition resisted. After making a speech full of contradictions, Haase voted in favour of the credits. There was still one dissentient, however; Liebknecht intended to register a contrary vote, but first he wanted to speak. This, however, was forbidden by the Speaker, and he sat down again. Finally even this rebel was convinced by his comrades, and the Social-democratic group voted the first credit of the war.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

"SPARTACUS"

THE SCENE of activity changes from Parliament to the battlefield. The cities are deserted, and women in mourning garb appear in the streets. Alone among the proletariat the British workers continue to protest, but they too march off to the front. The Socialists are completely routed; they had begun like fervent pacifists, but little by little they had given way under pressure. The Press, the police, ideological confusion, and false but opportune rumours, such as that of a French air-raid on Nüremberg, were all responsible for their defeat. Most of the German Socialists believed in all good faith that Germany had been attacked by "barbarous Russian Czarism", while the French thought that they were defending the cause of liberty and democracy against Prussian militarism. No one country touched by this vicious circle was more nationalist than another; nevertheless it is unquestionable that the countries reacted in 1914 in the measure to which they adhered to the theory of the struggle against "oppressor Powers". It was doubtless because of this that Russian Czarism failed to win over the Socialist leaders, or to awaken patriotic enthusiasm in the masses. The Czar lacked a clear-cut pretext. Bethmann-Hollweg, the German Chancellor, had even gone so far as to remind the Socialists that Marx and Bebel had supported the idea of a war against Czarism. (War with France being inevitable, it was, in fact, his idea to involve Germany in a war with Russia in order to get the Socialist vote in the Reichstag.) But what arguments could the Czar or the Russian

Government bring forward? No more sinister autocracy than the Czarist one existed. Poincaré drew applause from the 400 deputies of the Bourbon Palace by his attacks on Prussianism. But what could the Russian politicians say to the oppressed people, the constant victims of Cossack soldiery? Did any Russian citizen seriously believe that Russia was bringing liberty to the rest of Europe? The Russian Socialists therefore had an easier part to play than their French or German comrades. The workers of Moscow or St. Petersburg were pleased to see the Czar involved in a warlike adventure; they could not possibly be worse off after the war than they had been before it. And mobilisation of the Russian people nine years after the revolution of 1905 was not a very gratifying event for Nicholas II, whose spirit was heavy with a presentiment of the dangerous consequences of teaching the moujik to handle a rifle.

If we seek the causes of the collapse of the Western Socialist organisations, we find the following: In the first place, the European Governments convinced the enemies of war that their battle was a defensive one; secondly, Russian Czarism for the Germans, and Prussian militarism for the French, appeared, thanks to propaganda, not only as aggressive régimes, but also as oligarchies ready to oppress foreign peoples and to rule them by the whip or the sword; thirdly, the criterion of Marx and Bebel created so much confusion that it became one of the reasons given by the British workers for not wanting to fight on the Russian side; fourthly, there was a complete absence of revolutionary feeling in the majority of the Socialist Parties.

From the beginning of the war the attitude of capitalism towards Social-democracy underwent a change, and the Government very wisely attempted to gain the support of the Socialists by yielding them ground on the home front. Social-democratic books and papers were suddenly allowed the same freedom of circulation as the literature and Press of the bourgeoisie. Those Social-democratic deputies who had up to then been unable to exercise their mandates, were granted authority to do so. And the members of organised Socialism, who had never before been eligible for Government posts, were given positions in railway companies and other undertakings controlled or managed by the State. The Social-democratic citizen received the same treatment as the Progressive, the Liberal or the Conservative. All the disabilities which had previously made a third-class German of the Socialist were suddenly removed. There remained only first-class Germans. The Socialists did not see through the trick, or if they saw through it they did not expose it. Officially Social-democracy ignored the concessions, for when Kautski proposed

that the Parliamentary group should vote the credits in exchange for certain concessions in internal policy, the proposal was unanimously rejected, not without a certain indignation.

France had achieved *l'union sacrée*. Germany also had her *Burgfrieden*, that civil peace which was to bring about collaboration between all the parties and prevent the frittering away in internal strife of energy needed for the war. The civil peace of the Germans was, however, scarcely real. In any case, at no time during the four years of the war was it complete. The Bethmann Government was indirectly influenced by the military, all of whom were annexationists. It was not a Government of democratic origin, but had been imposed on Parliament by the Emperor; it gave satisfaction to no one, and its unpopularity was notorious. The failure of its foreign policy was considered by the proletariat and a large proportion of the middle classes as the cause of the war. On the other hand, the Chancellor never tired of repeating that Germany was only defending herself, and that she never had the slightest intention of conquering fresh territory. The *grande bourgeoisie* demanded power for the Army, while the middle classes and the proletariat called for a democratic Government drawn from the Reichstag.

Neither Parliament nor Government could see the path Germany was travelling, nor her destination. The Socialists alone had a "programme". "An annexationist war", they said, "is inadmissible. In our view, war, to be lawful, must be of an entirely defensive nature." On this score disagreement grew between the Government and the Socialists, on the one hand, and among the Social-democrats themselves, on the other. Scheidemann, in the autumn of 1914, asked the Government to make peace.

The three points of issue at the time were war aims, submarine warfare and Parliamentarism. Tirpitz was prosecuting naval warfare with an appalling cruelty. Social-democracy urged a defensive war; it condemned the bestial activities of the submarines, and demanded that all problems should be resolved in the Reichstag. But the war did not become a defensive one, nor did the Reichstag or the Landtages fulfil their mission. Germany did not escape from the clutches of the military until 1918.

Bethmann-Hollweg, trapped between Parliament and the demands of the Army generals, which were also those of the Kaiser, once again declared that Germany was renouncing a war of conquest. The obscure policy of the Chancellor and the obvious intrigues of Wilhelm II and the General Staff aroused the anger of many Social-democratic deputies. As the reader may imagine,

Liebknecht was at the head of the rebels. Within the Party the discussions became increasingly violent and the disagreements wider; the unity of the German proletariat was a fiction.

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In August 1914 the Left-wing Socialists began to organise opposition, and in December Liebknecht voted against the concession of further credits. Dissension spread through the Party, and the provincial groups passed resolutions against the attitude of the Parliamentary section. In Berlin itself the radical tendencies of Liebknecht gained ground, and the first move to create a schism was taken on September 18th in Stuttgart. Under the guidance of Liebknecht and Westmeyer the leaders of the new movement met together, and all agreed that the Party ought to have tried to prevent war by every means in its power, a general strike being the most obvious method. As it had not done so, but had, on the contrary, supported the Government, it had betrayed the principles of Socialism. Here we have the embryo of the Communist Party in Germany.

A journalist who was present at the Reichstag meetings of the time has written of Liebknecht's Parliamentary activities in the following words:

"Indifferent to everything, with a self-assurance amounting to obstinacy, Liebknecht went ahead with his task. His intervention in the Reichstag became a permanent aspect of the sessions, and continued to increase up to the time of his arrest. It was obvious that he had adopted the methods of Lassalle; just as that great romantic of German Socialism used the lobbies and Parliamentary benches for propaganda, so Liebknecht took hold of any pretext in the Reichstag, whatever may have been the subject of discussion, to stir up the people against those who were responsible for the war. The minutes should be read of that historic debate in which, through the deafening clamour of the Chamber, Liebknecht pronounced these stirring words: 'You can do nothing against Time; the cloud of lies is breaking, and the day will come when the German people will see how for many the crime of Sarajevo was a heaven-sent gift, the pretext for leading Europe into war, of which the Prussian military caste had been dreaming for years.' The censorship worked unceasingly to prevent Liebknecht's accusations from passing over the frontier, and other Parliamentary parties demanded that the strongest disciplinary measures should be taken against him. As time went on he was, in fact, refused the right to speak in the Reichstag, but he continued to make interruptions, and the deputies had to listen to

him whether they would or no. Of the sessions immediately preceding his arrest, nothing more than a few rumours reached the outside world; the newspapers were forbidden to publish his interruptions, of which there was not even an echo in the shorthand reports. It is public knowledge, however, that one afternoon various deputies, led by Müller, threw themselves on him bodily, and he only escaped serious injury thanks to the defence of a few deputies of the Socialist minority. All the parties, including the Socialist majority, demanded his ejection from the Reichstag, and the demonstrations of the First of May gave the Prussian authorities the necessary excuse. Liebknecht was arrested and tried for stirring up rebellion."

On May 1st, 1916, Liebknecht, a "prisoner in the Kaiser's army", had, in effect, organised an anti-war demonstration. This took place in the Potsdamer Platz of Berlin, and was followed by his arrest. During the trial of the Socialist agitator there were various clashes between the authorities and the workers, who were still organising demonstrations in spite of the mounted police and the violent repression. The operators in Krupps' establishments declared a strike, and in Berlin alone 50,000 factory workers downed tools. The tribunal appeased the strikers, and gave Liebknecht a severe sentence; he was, however, re-tried on several occasions, and finally condemned to several years' imprisonment. The leading strikers were put into uniform and marched off to the front.

Within the Party, opposition against the majority increased, and little by little different protesting groups began to form. In April 1915 the first and only issue of the review *The International*, edited by Rosa Luxemburg and Mehring, appeared, only to die a sudden death at the hands of the censorship. But in spite of the brevity of its existence, it gave a name to the Luxemburg–Mehring–Liebknecht section, which was known as the "International Group". Liebknecht was at the time speaking in Parliament as an Independent, for at the beginning of the year he had broken away from the Parliamentary Socialist group. Only one deputy, Rühle, followed him.

Up to the autumn of 1915 the "International Group" was united to that of the moderate Opposition led by Haase. And on New Year's Day 1916 the first National Congress was held in Liebknecht's house, where a programme drawn up by Rosa Luxemburg, and published under the *nom de plume* of Junius, served as a basis for discussion, and was approved by the group as an ideological and tactical line of policy. The members agreed

to publish a clandestine journal entitled *Spartacus*, after the Roman revolutionary. The group retained its name until January 1st, 1919, when it became known officially as the Communist Party.

This Spartacist group maintained that the proletariat has only one country, the Socialist International, that the "Social-patriotic" concepts which inspire men to defend their country are nothing but "confusionist phrases", and that the centre of gravity of the proletarian class organisation is the International. "The duty of fulfilling the decisions of the International must precede all other duties dictated by other organisations. The task of the moment is to carry on the class struggle against war, and to impose peace through the will of the masses."

The Spartacists maintained contact with the Radical Socialists in other countries, the majority of whom had taken part in the Zimmerwald Conference convened by Lenin, Trotski, Grimm and Radek in the summer of 1915.

Rosa Luxemburg was also imprisoned. But imprisonment did not prevent this weak and delicate woman from carrying on revolutionary propaganda. On the other hand, Liebknecht, who was considered more dangerous, and who was therefore subject to greater surveillance, was not allowed to communicate with the masses during his reclusion. The *Spartakusbriefe* (Letters from Spartacus) were first issued in August 1915, and from that time they enjoyed a wide though clandestine circulation. Their substance was the theories agreed on in Liebknecht's house. They violently attacked the Social-democratic majority and the *Sozialistische Arbeitsgemeinschaft* (Socialist "Workers' Community"), the name given to the Kautski–Haase group before it became the "German Independent Social-Democratic Party", reproaching the latter with being a "Half-and-Half" organisation and with lacking any clear objective.

Another separatist group, of less significance, was formed in the North, under the leadership of Julian Borchard and the "Left-Wing Radicals" led by J. Knief and P. Frölich. This group published a review, *Arbeiterpolitik*, in Bremen, to which Radek contributed and which enjoyed a free circulation. But the movement of the "German International Socialists" did not spread beyond the confines of the Hanseatic provinces.

The largest Opposition section at the time was Haase's moderate group, and Kautski, who was really the backbone of this section, took it upon himself to justify the schism theoretically in the *Neue Zeit*. Bergstrasser has rightly said that this was "the group of those who hesitated between theory and practice".

The breaking away of the Independents was the culmination of a disagreement in the Social-democratic group dating from 1914

when Kautski, playing a lone hand, proposed abstention from the voting of credits. At the time fourteen deputies opposed the voting of credits for a war which was not a strictly defensive one. In December 1914 there were seventeen contrary votes; in March 1915 twenty-five, and in August 1915 thirty-six. In December of the same year, of the 108 deputies in the Social-democratic section, forty-three said that they would no longer respect the discipline of the group. This was the last time that Social-democracy voted *en masse* in the Reichstag.

At the instance of its Left wing, the Social-democratic group had appealed to the Chancellor, with the object of obtaining from the Government a confirmation of Bethmann's statement that Germany was renouncing an offensive and annexationist policy. The reply of the Chancellor was significant; it was not for him, he said, to make a pronouncement on the subject. The game was obvious. On his own behalf Haase declared that such an obscure yet transparent policy was a compromise to which he could not subscribe by supporting the Government. The Socialist Press approved Haase's speech, and the *Vorwärts* said on December 10th, 1915, that thirty-one Social-democratic deputies shared his opinion.

Legien, intelligent and hard-working, proposed that the minority should break away, a proposal which was rejected, although the National Committee of Social-democracy and the majority group sternly condemned the conduct of Haase and his followers. The schism had only been deferred.

In March 1916 the question of the Budget arose. The majority voted it unreservedly, but the minority refused to do this. Haase endorsed his refusal in the following words: "We Socialists who reject war, naturally oppose its prolongation. Among the proletarian masses the feeling is growing that they are being forced to fight for interests other than their own." The dispute had ended. Legien's proposal was resuscitated and approved, and on March 24th the previously-mentioned "Socialist Workers' Community" was founded.

Free at last from the shackles of discipline, the minority deputies began a violent attack on the Government. In June 1916 they fought against the new taxes, including the direct ones which, generally speaking, did not affect the workers, but which "in the last resort serve the Imperialist war, which we will not tolerate". From the benches of the Reichstag they condemned submarine warfare. They rejected the new war credits, and said that they would use Parliament solely as a method of propaganda.

In the spring of 1917 the Haase–Kautski group held a Con-

ference in Gotha, when they finally broke away from Social-democracy. It was then that they changed their name, and from that time they were known as the Independent Social-democratic Party.

The end of the war was approaching, and was to find German Socialism divided into three groups, two of which were irreconcilable.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

THE COLLAPSE OF THE IMPERIAL MONARCHY

THE WAR lasted just so long as the military leaders wanted it to last. By 1917 the peoples were exhausted; in Germany, particularly, the privations and sacrifices forced on the proletariat by the economic blockade were beyond description. For months the working classes had lived on an almost exclusive diet of carrots—fried carrots, boiled carrots, raw carrots; carrots for breakfast, carrots for lunch, carrots for dinner. Women, performing miracles of dress-making, made clothes for themselves and their children out of sheets and blankets. Not a bolt or a latch remained in the houses; every metal object had been requisitioned by Government officials. Even the fruit-stones were collected and kept for making oil. Then the supplies of coal began to run out, and in the bitter winter of 1917–18 thousands of half-clad and half-starved children died of cold. There came a time when even the hated carrots began to fail. Hunger lowered the spirits of the people, and there were few who followed the military operations on the map as they had done during the first two years of war. Patriotic enthusiasm died away, and "Peace at any price" was the cry. Peace! It was the one word on everybody's lips.

At the front the same thing was happening; the German soldiers, as well as the civilians, were going hungry. The German Army had received its death-blow, and when on August 8th, 1918 it met the English tank divisions at Albert, it began to collapse. The dreams of Ludendorff, that phantom general, of keeping Belgium under German domination, of flouting war sanctions and annexing the Baltic countries, all dissolved in smoke.

Germany had been vanquished. The great Teutonic Empire was crashing into ruins at the feet of its Emperor.

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On March 17th, 1917, the first reports of the Russian democratic revolution reached Germany. Up to then the oligarchies had not believed that in the midst of war a revolution could possibly be successful. Profoundly disquieted, the Kaiser's

camarilla, who had seen the storm ahead, began to make concessions to the people. The idea that at the end of the war a revolution would break out in Germany was daily gaining ground. Wilhelm II knew it; the General Staff knew it; so did the bourgeoisie, and the proletariat. The one thing they did not know was what kind of a revolution it would be. The majority group of the Socialists thought, naturally, of a democratic revolution; the Spartacists and the Independents of a social revolution. The aristocratic military classes and the bourgeoisie shared the opinion of the Socialist majority.

For fifty years Social-democracy had been fighting for universal suffrage—equal, secret and direct—in opposition to all the bourgeois parties. And 10 million men had to be killed, and a Russian revolution to take place, before His Majesty the Kaiser and his côterie could decide that such a demand was not an extravagant one. Wilhelm II realised, with the bourgeois parties and the capitalists, that the time had come to save what could be saved from the wreck. Overnight Germany had become a nation of democrats with the Emperor at its head.

Social-democracy was overjoyed; had not the fortress of autocracy yielded at last? On March 29th an influential member of the Party stood up in the Reichstag and demanded that electoral rights should be extended to all the German States, including Prussia, and that there should be a fresh division of the electoral districts of the Empire, to correspond with the growth of the population since 1867. The speaker ended by proposing that the social reforms contained in Social-democracy's minimum programme should be carried out immediately.

Stresemann, of the National-Liberal Party—the political expression of industry—stated that his group considered the question of Prussian electoral rights as a German problem, adding: "The Government must proceed from Parliament." In this way the National-Liberal Party acknowledged itself to be democratic. The Progressives and the Catholic Centre supported the Socialist proposal. Of all the bourgeois organisations, only the Conservatives, who owed their seats to the injustices of the electoral system, opposed the suggestion of the Social-democratic majority.

There was not long to wait. At the beginning of April an Imperial decree announced the reform of the Prussian electoral system. The changes were certainly not as wide as the Reichstag had demanded; there was to be a secret and direct ballot, but there was no question of any equality. A German historian has said that Wilhelm II made a mistake in this "because Social-democracy, according to Congressional documents, was ready at the time, and up to the end of the year, to ally itself (*sich*

verbünden) with a Parliamentary-democratic monarchy". The democratisation of Parliament, or the Parliamentarisation of the régime, was proceeding rapidly, and the Russian revolution and collapse of the Empire considerably hastened the process. Within a very short time—an evidence of the political crisis through which Germany was passing—two Chancellors succeeded each other in the Wilhelmstrasse: Michaelis and Count Hertling, the latter from the Right wing of the Catholic Centre. They were worthy successors of Bethmann-Hollweg; both had been dragged from obscurity by the Kaiser, and neither had the stature of a Chancellor. In the first case Wilhelm II did not ask the approval of the Reichstag, but before appointing Count Hertling to the Chancellery he got into contact, for the first time since ascending the throne, with the Parliamentary parties. Such a sacrifice is more eloquent than anything else of the Kaiser's fears for his crown. Count Hertling fell from power without leaving any mark, and was succeeded by the last Chancellor of the Empire, the man who, while yet in power, was to assist at the obsequies of the German monarchy—Prince Max von Baden. Baden was a decent person, understanding and democratic, with no militarist passion. But then, after the Kaiser's recent conversion, democracy had become a political shibboleth in the Court.

The Parties had got what they wanted. The Chancellor was no favourite of the Kaiser; he relied on the Reichstag and had the temerity to say that he would not form a Government if he could not draw on the Social-democratic Party for some of his Ministers. It was clear that the Empire was becoming genuinely democratised. Wilhelm II, when he received Prince Max von Baden in the autumn of 1918, was a shadowy figure bowed down by the enormous weight of uncertainty. How far away were those days of 1914 when Germany possessed the second largest fleet in the world? The days of the bellicose speeches; of *Gott mit uns* and *Deutschland über Alles!* Today all that was changed. Today a ghastly spectre was ever before his eyes, which he strove in vain to exorcise—the spectre of abdication.

Von Baden's stipulation was discussed over and over again in the National Committee and the Parliamentary group of the Social-democratic Party. At a meeting of both organisations it was agreed that they should enter the Government on certain conditions, of which the most important were the following: Immediate peace, the express declaration that Germany would be ready to join a society of nations competent to resolve international conflicts, and based on general disarmament; an equivocal pledge to rebuild Belgium, Serbia and Montenegro, and to reach an agreement on war reparations; a declaration that the

peace resolutions of Brest-Litovsk and Bucharest would not constitute any obstacle to general peace; the immediate setting up of a civil administration in occupied territories; the cession of occupied countries on the signing of peace; autonomy for Alsace and Lorraine; general electoral rights, equal, secret and direct, for all the German States; dissolution of the Prussian Landtag if the Senate did not authorise a modification of the electoral system; unity in the Reich Government; the introduction of a system of Parliamentary Government; the re-establishment of the liberty of citizens (abolition of the censorship and the ban on political meetings, etc.).

The ballot showed a decided minority for unconditional participation in the Government. But the majority hesitated; they were sure that the Government would not satisfy the minimum claims. Friedrich Ebert, however, the harness-maker who was to precede Hindenburg as President, reminded the leaders of their responsibilities. "If Social-democracy does not intervene", he said, "there will be neither a rapid peace nor State democratisation. In order to satisfy these two demands of the German people we must join the Government." Scheidemann drew a sombre picture of the situation and refused to take any part in ministerial collaboration. Otto Wels expressed his fears that when the Empire foundered, Social-democracy would go down with it. Ebert, a prodigy of political sense, ended by convincing them all, or nearly all. "If we want the Government to have its roots in Parliament," he asked, "how can we stand aloof ourselves? Can there by any chance be a Parliamentary Government without Social-democracy?" Ebert's dialectics were irrefutable.

A few days later Prince Max von Baden formed a Cabinet, in which the three parties who later were to constitute the historic coalition of Weimar were represented—the Catholic Centre, the Progressives and Social-democracy. For all, but especially for Social-democracy, the gift was of the nature of Pandora's box. The revolution had begun; the Empire was falling in pieces; the General Staff had written to Prince Max asking him to propose an armistice to the Allies with all urgency. When the Social-democrats joined the Cabinet they had no notion of the magnitude of the catastrophe which was approaching.

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Even at that late hour it was thought that the people would continue to resist. Rathenau asked in the *Vossische Zeitung* for a *levée en masse*, and Ludendorff begged Social-democracy to raise the patriotic morale of the people. The next day the *Vorwärts* published a terrible manifesto: "Germany and the German

people run the risk of becoming victims of the annexationist desires of the French and British Chauvinists and the conquering politicians," and ended by attacking war profiteers and the "Bolshevik apostles" who put obstacles in the way of peace and State democratisation.

The Social-democrats wanted to democratise the State with all possible speed. With feverish zeal they took advantage of the collapse of the ruling classes to obtain concessions, and applied themselves to the legal destruction of the Imperialist Monarchy. Farther than that, however, they did not venture, either in thought or deed. What need was there for a revolution? Had not the Reichstag in twenty-four sessions agreed on the reform of the Constitution and the creation of a democratic and Parliamentary State? Had not Wilhelm II signed the reform of the Constitution on December 28th?

The Kaiser, tardily converted to Liberalism, thought to save himself by signing decrees inspired by Social-democracy. Abdication seemed to him inconceivable. But on October 29th, without taking farewell of his cousin Prince Max, he left Berlin and marched into the General Army Headquarters. The proud Emperor had gone away "for fear of influenza". This desertion proved to the Chancellor that the Monarchy was dead, and he looked round for a prince to advise Wilhelm to abdicate, but without success. And by November 8th, 1918, when half Germany was a mass of explosive material waiting for the fatal spark, the Kaiser was still refusing to give up the throne. During one of his attacks of megalomania he believed that he could establish order by placing himself at the head of his troops. Delirium of a fevered imagination! The soldiers did not want him; Army discipline was undermined. There was one division on which he counted to defend the Army Headquarters between Cologne and Aachen, but even that failed him. The men disobeyed their officers, and leaving the Headquarters unprotected, went off to their homes.

Despised more than hated by his people, Wilhelm II made a hasty flight to Holland. Not one voice was raised in his defence.

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There was still a strong Press censorship, and nothing was definitely known in Berlin of what had happened in Kiel, the most important war port in Germany, but rumours of a Naval mutiny spread with lightning rapidity. In Kiel "something tremendous" had occurred. When Wilhelm II abdicated, the port and the town had already been in the hands of the sailors for a week. On November 1st a Seamen's Council was formed in the Volkshaus. It was to have met for the first time the following

day, but the Naval Command forbade the meeting and imprisoned the most active agitators. On November 3rd, in spite of the threats of the military authorities, a huge protest demonstration took place on the parade-ground, at which thousands of workers demanded the liberation of the imprisoned sailors. The military parades were over; this was a civil parade of the working classes, who were for the first time breathing into their lungs air from the new Russia. Extempore speakers made frantic speeches, and at the end of the meeting the cry rose from 10,000 throats: "Set free the prisoners!" The troops, unable to restrain the people, fired on them, killing eight and wounding twenty-nine. By November 4th revolutionary feeling in Kiel was at fever heat; the High Command and officers of the Navy surrendered, while some, on the *Koenig* and other vessels, were killed. The sailors had become masters of the situation, and the land forces joined them. In Kiel there was only one authority—the Council of Workers and Soldiers.

On the following day the *Völkische Zeitung* of Schleswig-Holstein wrote:

> "The Revolution is on the march. What has happened in Kiel will happen in other places during the next few days, giving impetus to a movement which will traverse the whole of Germany."

From Kiel the rebellion spread to Hamburg, and on the night of November 8th it was learnt in Berlin that it had triumphed, with little or no resistance, in Hanover, Magdeburg, Cologne, Munich, Stuttgart, Frankfurt-am-Main, Brunswick, Oldenburg, Wittenberg and other cities. At the station of Rotenburgort, on the Berlin–Hamburg line, armed marines searched a Berlin express, and finding two officers in one of the compartments, ordered them to hand over their swords. This done, the officers were then thrown out on to the platform.

The backbone of the revolution was the Council of Workers and Soldiers, an organism created by the Russians. Social-democracy accepted these Councils as a *fait accompli*, and even recommended that others should be created when the time came to form the new democratic State. While the Spartacists saw in them an instrument for gradual evolution into the Soviet, the Social-democrats realised that nothing could be done against them, and therefore approved and commended them as transitory organisms which must come to an end on the birth of a Constituent Parliament.

The majority group of the Social-democrats found themselves in a very compromising position in the Baden Government.

Wilhelm II had not abdicated, and their conditions for entering the Cabinet had not been fulfilled. The armistice was still unsigned; the Berlin proletariat were threatening to rebel, and economic conditions were worsening. The whole country was waiting, undisciplined, naked and hungry. In the face of this situation, the Parliamentary group sent an ultimatum to the Chancellor, stating that if Wilhelm II had not abdicated by sunset on November 8th, Social-democracy would withdraw its representatives from the Government. The ultimatum was successful, and Prince Max promised to continue dealing with the affairs of State until circumstances should allow the formation of a Parliamentary Government.

The Socialists regained their liberty of movement. Many feared that revolution would break out without them or against them. The Spartacist group had been agitating continuously ever since the military defeat in August; the Independents dragged large masses of the people with them, and, together with the Spartacists, were dominant in Berlin. At eight o'clock in the morning of November 9th the abdication of the Kaiser, awaited nervously and impatiently by the French and British, had still not reached the Army headquarters at Spa, and without it an armistice was impossible. Convinced that if they waited any longer a strike would be called by others, the Social-democrats and the Trades Unions gave the order to cease work, an order obeyed enthusiastically by the Berlin workers. At mid-day General von Linsingen issued a decree forbidding the troops to fire even in the defence of public buildings. The bourgeoisie stayed indoors and the military went about in civilian clothes. The Naumburg *chasseurs*, garrisoned in Berlin, protected the *Vorwärts*, which was in imminent danger of being occupied by the Spartacists, and of sharing the fate of the *Hamburger Echo*, whose policy the Liebknecht partisans had changed, renaming this Hamburg paper *Die Rote Fahne* (The Red Flag).

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Social-democracy tried zealously but vainly to make contact with Haase and the Independents. They did not count on the Spartacists, who wanted to go too far. A meeting was called in which the formation of a transitional Socialist Government was discussed, but the Independents, vacillating between the majority Socialists and the Spartacist group, did not attend. Without further hesitation, the Social-democrats Ebert, Scheidemann and Otto Braun called at the Wilhelmstrasse, where they were informed by the Chancellor that a telegram had been received announcing the Kaiser's abdication. Ebert expounded the national situation to Prince Max: in Berlin the troops had joined

the people; it was urgently necessary to create a complete democracy, and it was not likely that there would be any resistance. They, the Socialists, promised to maintain order. The Chancellor surrendered the reins of government to Ebert, who addressed a proclamation to the nation, of which the following is an abstract:

"Citizens: Prince Max von Baden, who until today was Chancellor of the Empire, has, with the consent of his collaborators, handed to me the Chancellorship. I propose to form a Government in agreement with the Parties. It will be a People's Government and its programme will consist in giving back peace as soon as possible to the German people, and ensuring them the liberty that they have won.

"Citizens: I invite you to help us in our difficult task, for you all know to what extent the food supply of the people is in danger. It is the primary duty of everyone to remain in the fields or the towns, and not to place obstacles in the way of the production of food or of its transport to the cities. The lack of food means misery for all. The poorest would suffer terribly, and the industrial workers would endure unheard-of hardships.

"Citizens: I beg you to leave the streets. A city of law and order!"

But Ebert was asking almost the impossible. The masses swarmed through the streets of Berlin. Curiosity impelled them to the centre of the town, to the King's Square and the Lustgarten, where high over an empty palace a red flag waved. . . .

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

STREET-FIGHTING IN BERLIN

ON THAT same 9th of November, early in the afternoon, the crowd surged through the Unter den Linden, passed under the Brandenburger Tor, and stationed themselves opposite the Reichstag. Fifty months earlier another crowd had passed through the same gate, had marched along the same boulevard, and had stopped in the Lustgarten, opposite the palace of Wilhelm II. In 1914 they were shouting for war, and vengeance or Serbia; in 1918 the cry was "Peace, Freedom and Bread!" It was the war which had been responsible for this historic *volte face*.

In the King's Square, which was to become Republican Square and, on Hitler's accession, King's Square once again, the crowd swarmed like bees round a hive. At two o'clock in the afternoon, Scheidemann appeared on one of the balconies of the Reichstag.

The tumult died down, and after five minutes had passed absolute silence reigned, save for the chirping of the sparrows as they flew round the statues of the square. Then Scheidemann spoke: "Citizens, workers, comrades!" he said. "The Monarchist system has collapsed. A large part of the Army garrisons have joined us. The Hohenzollerns have abdicated. Long live the great German Republic! Friedrich Ebert will form a new Government to which all the leaders of Social-democracy will belong. The Army Command has been handed to the Socialist deputy Göhre, who, with the President, will sign all decrees. Our present task is to ensure that the victory of the people is complete. I therefore beg you to see that there is no change in the present order. Long live the free German Republic!" The crowd cheered loud and long.

The Republic had been proclaimed. But the revolution was not yet over.

On the 9th of November there were casualties in various parts of Berlin. Socialists of every shade and tendency occupied the Post Office, the Telegraph building, the Wolff Agency, the Military Command and the Palace. When the crowd swarmed round this last building, Liebknecht stepped out on to the same balcony from which the Kaiser had spoken in the feverish days of June. A thunderous ovation greeted this leader, the most dangerous enemy of the Empire and Prussian militarism—far more dangerous than the weak and hesitating Harden. His words were hard, implacable, in violent contrast to those of Scheidemann. He was fighting for a Socialist Republic; the Government should be based, not on Parliament, but on the Councils of Workers and Soldiers, and Germany, in conjunction with Bolshevist Russia, would bring Socialism to the whole world. When Liebknecht had finished his speech the listening multitudes raised their arms as though taking an oath. One man shouted: "Long live Karl Liebknecht, the first President of the Socialist Republic!" To which Liebknecht replied: "We haven't got as far as that yet!"

The revolution opened the prison gates to all the political prisoners. Rosa Luxemburg, who had been incarcerated in Breslau for some months, was set free on November 9th.

The Spartacist group became a sort of Left wing to the Independent group. Liebknecht's plan, which was to win over the Independents to the cause of a Socialist dictatorship, had slender prospects, for the Independents, including their leader, Haase, were closer to the majority Socialist-democrats than to the Spartacists. Liebknecht's slogan, "Complete power for the Councils of Workers and Soldiers," found scarcely an echo in the ranks of the

Independents, who were always confused in their doctrine and their tactics.

Social-democracy stated its position in respect of Liebknecht's Communist programme, in a document which it sent to the Independents in order that they should be able to choose between Spartacus and majority Socialism. This document, of which the points are given in summarised form below, is a theoretical statement of unquestionable value.

1. Social Republic? Yes. That is the objective of our policy, a policy on which the people will vote in the Constituent Assembly.

2. Complete power for the Councils of Workers and Soldiers? No. We reject the idea of the dictatorship of one class if the majority of the people are not behind that class. Such a dictatorship is a contradiction of our democratic principles.

3. Exclusion of the bourgeois members of the Government? No. Such an action would place insuperable obstacles in the way of food supplies, and greatly endanger the well-being of the people.

4. Participation of the Independents for three days only in the Government, in order that a competent Cabinet might sign the armistice? We consider the collaboration of all Socialist leaders necessary, at least until the Constituent Assembly has met.

5. Should the bourgeois Under-Secretaries and General Directors be merely technical advisers? Very good.

6. Equality of rights for the two leaders of the Cabinet? Yes, and for all the members of the Government. The Constituent Assembly will determine this point in due course.

Other theoretical data tracing the policy of Social-democracy completed the Six-Point document. Social-democracy swung over to the Right, rectifying the theoretical conclusions of the Congresses previous to 1914. In the opinion of the Social-democrats, the interests of the working classes were linked more firmly to the National State than had been supposed. As a consequence, the collapse of the Reich in its fight against Great Britain would delay for many years the emancipation of the international proletariat (Lensch). It had been said that Capitalism would not withstand a world war, but it had done so. As the theory of the final collapse of Capitalism had not been confirmed, it was certain that Capitalism would die in some other way (Hanisch). It had already been seen that Imperialism was a necessary stage in the development of Capitalism, and as such it must be understood. When realities do not correspond to ideology, the latter must be revised. . . . The unilateral point of view of class was mistaken. It was said that the worker only lives in a class, but he also lives in a society, a nation, a State; and society is a social and historic reality, like class (Cunow).

The majority Socialists were not Parliamentarians by tactics, but rather by temperament and conviction. It was therefore not surprising that they should consider the Spartacist movement a revolutionary one. They did all they could to win over Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg, but in vain. Holding fast to their ideals, convinced that Capitalism, which had been dealt a severe blow, would quickly recover, they believed that the Social-demoorats had betrayed the Socialist revolution. The Spartacist group would not collaborate; it would therefore be necessary to bring pressure to bear on the Independents.

It was not a difficult matter for Ebert and Scheidemann to gain the collaboration of Haase, Dittmann and Barth. Ready to make sure of the victories which had been won, they accepted office in a Government of People's Commissars (Volksbeauftragten). The conditions were that each Party was to be represented in the Government by three Ministers, and each Minister was to have two Under-Secretaries—one from the majority group and one from the Independents. The term of office of the Cabinet was to be unlimited, and political power was to rest in the Councils of Workers and Soldiers. The National Assembly was to be deferred. This last point read as follows:

"The question of the Constituent Assembly will only become topical when the circumstances created by the revolution have been consolidated."

Every condition save the last was approved by the majority group. Ebert wanted to convene the Constituent Assembly without delay. On the other points there was no discussion, since—according to Hermann Müller—political power in reality resided in the Councils of Workers and Soldiers. Unity, so easily achieved, created a magnificent effect in the ranks of both organisations.

The first German Socialist Government consisted of:

Ebert: Interior and Army.
Haase: Foreign Affairs and Colonies.
Scheidemann: Treasury.
Dittmann: Demobilisation and Health.
Landsberg: Press and Information.
Barth: Social Policy.

The Independents yielded after scant resistance. But Karl Liebknecht still wandered lone in the wilderness.

On November 10th the ultra-reactionary paper *Lokalanzeiger* published on its front page the following paragraph:

"NOTICE: Late yesterday afternoon we took over what was until then the *Lokalanzeiger*. The news is therefore not given in the form in which we propose subsequently to explain problems and events. From tomorrow this will be changed.—The Editors of the *Rote Fahne*, organ of the Spartacist group."

The paper was entitled *Die Rote Fahne, formerly Lokalanzeiger*. What had happened? Merely that the members of the Spartacist group had assaulted the *Scherl* Printing Office and, taking charge of the Editorial, had set about converting a Capitalist newspaper into a Red journal. The new *Rote Fahne* (Red Flag) described recent events as a bourgeois revolution. The Socialists themselves, convinced that such was not the case, indignantly denied this "slanderous accusation".

"What happens in all bourgeois revolutions", wrote the Spartacist paper, "is happening now. Events are succeeding each other rapidly. Every incident seems to be outlined in fire. The atmosphere is ecstatical. Marx spoke of this. But he also spoke of the heaviness which follows all bourgeois revolutions. Let us take care that this somnolence does not overtake us."

Concerning Ebert's manifesto the *Rote Fahne* said: "We, on the other hand, ask that no one shall leave the streets, but that every one shall remain armed and on the alert", adding, "The purpose of the invitation of the Chancellor who has followed the vanquished Emperor is to send back the masses to their homes in order to restore the old order of things. Workers, soldiers, remain on the alert!"

Another group of Left-wing Radicals occupied the printing and editorial offices of the *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*. This paper, whose title was changed to *Die Internationale*, also modified its text over-night, and on the front page the following notice appeared:

"On the instructions of the Council of Workers and Soldiers, this paper as from today becomes an organ of the Independents. Editor: E. Vogtherr."

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Rosa Luxemburg and Liebknecht broke off relations with Haase's Independents. At a meeting of the representatives of 3,000 workers and soldiers in Berlin, the members of a new authority, the Executive Council, which was to serve as a liaison between the Government and the Councils of Workers and Soldiers, were elected. Rosa Luxemburg and Liebknecht were asked to sit on this Council, but both refused. It was clear that the Spartacists would not let themselves be convinced, and equally clear that they were the most serious stumbling-block in the path

of the Social-democrats. The latter, with their practical and positivist attitude, were regaining the support of the masses. The Left-wing Radicals held a quarter of the seats in the Executive Council. The struggle was singularly violent, and workers' blood was still to be shed in abundance. When Liebknecht asked that the people should be armed and that the bourgeoisie should disarm, the Social-democrats said, "It would be the beginning of civil war!"; to which Liebknecht replied, "That is exactly what it would be!" The historic controversy between Reformist and Marxist Socialists showed no signs of ending. The two groups represented two antithetical conceptions of Socialism.

After a few days the workers in the *Scherl* Printing Office refused to set up the *Rote Fahne*, and from November 18th onwards it was printed in the works of the *Kleines Journal*. The title-page bore the words, "Editors: Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg."

The Spartacist journal maintained an unceasing hostility towards the Government, the Executive Council and the Independents, and its articles were a continuous incitement to armed rebellion. On December 6th, at a mass demonstration in the north of Berlin, troops fired on the crowd, killing sixteen and seriously wounding twelve. On the same day groups of armed soldiers, commanded by reactionary officers, marched into the Chancellery, to arrest the members of the Executive Council.

> "This *coup*", writes Hermann Müller, "was planned in support of the Ebert–Haase Government to counter the campaign of the Spartacist group. The leading spirit, a certain Spiro, who was neither Socialist nor Communist, had called on Ebert some days previously with other members of his regiment, and had said that he would demonstrate with the soldiers in favour of the Government. Spiro did his best to obtain Ebert's consent, but the latter considered such a manifestation unnecessary and explained to his visitors the desirability in such cases of workers taking their part with the soldiers. In spite of the Chancellor's recommendations, however, Spiro got his own way—a proof that reaction was still abroad."

After the fateful day of December 6th, the Spartacist Group began a merciless campaign against Social-democracy. The *Rote Fahne* wrote with unusual virulence:

> "Workers, soldiers, comrades! The Revolution is in danger! Preserve your handiwork of the 9th of November! . . . The criminals are Wels and company, Scheidemann, Ebert and company. . . . Throw the guilty men out of the Government! . . . We must foil the conspiracy of Wels, Ebert and Scheidemann. The Revolution must be saved. . . . Down with the

coward organisers of mutinies! . . . Forward to the task! To the fight!"

On Sunday, December 8th, the three Socialist Parties addressed the masses in order to explain, each from its own point of view, the events of the previous Friday. The Spartacists met in the Treptow Park, and the Independents in Friedrichshain, while the Social-democrats held fourteen meetings behind closed doors, and one open-air meeting in the Lustgarten. At this last Ebert spoke, ending his discourse with the words, "Long live liberty, democracy, the National Assembly and the old Social-democratic Party!"

At six o'clock in the evening, the Spartacists, headed by Karl Liebknecht, set out on their march. Passing through the Alexanderplatz and along the Unter den Linden, they finally arrived at the Chancellery, at the feet of whose walls it pleased Liebknecht to address the crowds.

With clenched fist held high, and head thrown back, Liebknecht said in a voice of steel:

"We have shown that we have the power to appropriate all this network" (referring to the official buildings), "and I say to each one of you that you must make known your will and your determination with these cries: 'Long live the social revolution! Long live the international revolution!' "

In a spacious hall of the Chancellery the Minister and members of the Executive Council had met together on the previous Saturday. The Left-wing Radicals accused the Government of ineptitude, and demanded that it should resign. "The masses", said the Radical Obuch, "will not be able to understand why Ebert continues in power." Richard Müller took up the refrain: "The Government is guilty. It has not countered the Press campaign against the Executive Council." (Scheidemann: "Freedom of the Press exists.") "Freedom ended when the papers ordered, 'Kill Liebknecht!' The hatred against Spartacus will be the death of the counter-revolution. Tomorrow huge masses of armed workers will pour into the streets."

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Violence had been unchained. The Spartacist Group knew that it was staking its all in the days preceding the National Assembly, and Social-democracy was well aware that Spartacism was capable of killing the democratic régime in the bud. The Spartacists were fanatics who were ready to die for their ideas. The words addressed to them by Karl Liebknecht, Rosa Luxemburg, Franz Mehring and Clara Zetkin in a manifesto of the previous month had become their slogan: "The days of empty

manifestos, platonic resolutions and high-sounding words have passed. For the International the hour of action has arrived!"

The Social-democratic rulers also prepared for action. The Executive Council, in which the Independents and Left-wing Radicals participated, was in continual collision with the Government of the People's Commissars. The Socialists convened a Congress of Workers and Soldiers in Berlin, which created, not a new Executive Council, but a Central Council (Zentralrat), consisting of twenty-seven members, all majority Socialists. The Left-wing representatives disappeared. The Ebert Government had eliminated the Opposition.

The following day the *Rote Fahne* stated:

> "We do not recognise Government agreements. The Congressmen have betrayed their constituents and have exceeded the limits of their mission. The Councils of Workers and Soldiers cannot be dissolved, for they were created on November 9th by the revolutionary action of the masses. Complete power is now in the hands of the partisans of Scheidemann. . . . And this is not all. Haase continues in the Council of the Commissars. Yes, Haase stays. And Dittmann and Barth as well. The Left wing of the Independents are breaking away from the Executive Council in order to retrieve their honour. The Rights, on the other hand, remain in order to screen political prostitution."

Up to now Spartacus had tried to gain power by theoretical means—that is to say, by propaganda. The attacks on the *Scherl* Printing Office, the *Vorwärts* and the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* are clear evidence of the need of the group to make themselves known to the masses and to win over their sympathy. Henceforth they spent their time preparing *coups* and making noisy appeals to the proletariat from Press and platform. Material and practical conquest of power had become an obsession with the Spartacists; wherever the fires of discontent burned, there would be Spartacus adding fuel to the flames which were to consume the new State.

Otto Wels, a Social-democrat of most commanding language and presence, yet at the same time kind-hearted and generous, was Chief of the Berlin Military Command. The *Rote Fahne*, either out of genuine conviction or for political gain, placed on him the responsibility for the events of the 6th December, laying to his account, with obvious injustice, the misbehaviour of the troops on that occasion. And on December 21st disturbances broke out in front of the Military Command, caused by the following incident.

In the Royal Palace various artistic objects worth about a million marks were suddenly missed, and on search being made, some of them were found on certain Marines who were garrisoned in the Palace and Royal Stables. The Government thereupon arranged to have the men transferred—after paying them their wages, amounting to RM.80,000—to shut up the Palace, and to deposit the keys in the headquarters of the Military Command. The representative of the Marines was a certain Dorrenbach, who, according to Hermann Müller, did not enjoy too sound a reputation. Taking advantage of the occasion to create disturbances, he incited his comrades to protest against being sent to the provinces. On December 22nd he called on Ebert at the Chancellery, but failing to find him immediately, he ordered the Marines on guard to close all the doors, to surround the building and to occupy the Telephone Exchange until Wels should satisfy their demands. In vain Ebert pleaded with the soldiers to leave the Chancellery; Dorrenbach refused to compromise. At the same time other groups of Marines mutinied outside the headquarters of the Military Command, and shots were fired from the University. Wels stepped out on to the balcony of the Command headquarters and gave orders that the firing was to cease, but his words had no effect. In the meantime an armoured car, proceeding from the Charlottenstrasse towards Unter den Linden, fired on the Marines, killing one and seriously wounding three. This incident aroused the men to fury, and breaking into the Command headquarters, rifles in hand, they arrested the Chief, and placed before him for his signature a document stating that the division would not be transferred. Wels refused to sign, and, with two colleagues, he was taken off by the Marines as their prisoner.

The Republican troops, on learning of this incident, decided to act. Army supporters of the Government marched towards the Wilhelmstrasse, and without firing a shot they succeeded, after laborious negotiations, in removing the Marines. In the Royal Stables, however, the situation was very different. Here the men were in a dangerous mood, and Wels, still a prisoner, was in grave peril of his life. Ebert telephoned the War Minister, Scheuch, telling him to do everything possible to liberate the Military Commander, a task which was entrusted to General Lequis. Berlin and Potsdam troops were called out, and at 7.30 on the morning of the 24th a lieutenant invited the men in the Royal Palace and Stables to surrender, on pain of being fired on by the artillery.

The Marines were in possession of five machine-guns and one cannon. No white flag was hoisted, and at eight o'clock in

the morning the Republican artillery opened fire on the Royal Palace and Stables. The firing continued until ten, causing serious damage to the Palace, but still the Marines did not surrender. Republican reinforcements arrived, but at the same time doubts began to make themselves felt in the minds of those who were apparently loyal to Ebert, and among the later arrivals many took the part of the Marines. The forces of General Lequis were becoming demoralised. At last, however, the white flag was hoisted, after twenty-one men had been killed and many more wounded. Of those twenty-one dead, nineteen were rebels and two Republicans, and of the nineteen rebels there were seven marines and twelve Spartacists. Wels came to no harm whatsoever. Four days later he resigned his post.

On December 25th the Spartacists and Marines assaulted the *Vorwärts*, claiming that it had published an article detrimental to the losing faction. On the 26th a red *Vorwärts* appeared for the first time on the Berlin bookstalls.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

THE DEFEAT OF THE COMMUNIST REVOLUTION

FOR GERMANY the year 1919 was prodigal in events of a far-reaching importance. On January 1st the Spartacist Group became the Communist Party. On January 2nd the Ministers of the Independent Group resigned. Between the 5th and the 12th there was a Communist rising in Berlin. On the 15th Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg were assassinated by reactionaries. On the 19th elections were held for the National Assembly. And on June 28th, at twelve minutes past three in the afternoon, the German delegates in Versailles signed the famous Peace Treaty.

Why did the three Independent Ministers leave the Government? The Spartacists had raised the issue of the Christmas disturbances, and violently attacked the Independent Ministers, who, they rightly said, were in nowise different from the majority Socialists. On the other hand, the Left-wing Independents voiced their discontent at the fact that the three Ministers had remained in power and that the Central Council was formed exclusively of majority Socialist leaders. After the election of the Central Council, and the December repression, the Independents were faced with the alternative of sharing the responsibility for everything or resigning, and they chose the latter course. The Berlin group of the Independent Party had, by 485 votes to 195, pronounced in favour of the policy of Hilferding, an Independent of

the stamp of Bernstein and Kautski, and against that of Rosa Luxemburg. Haase even stated on December 28th that he would not refuse to vote, in case of necessity, against the Spartacist Group. Nevertheless he left the Government, weakening under pressure from the Independents, who were in control of the revolutionaries in the factories. The moderate Independents, however, did whatever the revolutionaries ordered, even going so far, during the elections for the National Assembly, as to attack, in principle, Parliamentary democracy.

The three Independent Ministers were successfully replaced by two Social-democrats, Wissell and Noske, the former being given the portfolio of Social and Economic Policy and Demobilisation, and the latter that of Military and Naval Affairs.

The resignation of the Independent Ministers and the harangues of the *Rote Fahne*, the events of December and the foundation of the German Communist Party—which was openly supported by the Russians in its fight against the Ebert Ministry—were not likely to make for orderly sessions of the Constituent Assembly. "In order to protect the Assembly against terror and coercion", the men of the new régime agreed that its meeting-place should be at Weimar. They felt that they must leave Berlin, where heavy clouds of tragedy were massing over the city.

On the eve of its formation, the Communist Party issued a manifesto inviting the proletariat to join the new revolutionary organisation. Among other things this document stated:

> "The triumph of the working classes can only be attained through the revolution of armed workers. We Communists are the pioneers. This revolution must take place, for the bourgeoisie are preparing to defend themselves, and the proletariat must choose between their slavery by the bourgeoisie or their domination over the capitalist class. The National Assembly prepared by the Government will be an instrument with which the counter-revolutionaries will fight the proletarian revolution. By every means it is necessary to prevent a meeting of this Assembly."

Social-democracy also issued a manifesto, which said:

> "We Socialists will ensure without delay that all the rights of the people, including that of determining their own destinies, are recognised. Social-democracy has shown that it does not fear the judgment of the people."

And turning to the past, the manifesto added:

> "If we voted the war credits, it was for love of the working masses, not in order to obey the old ruling classes of Germany.

Our intention was to defend ourselves against powerful enemies, and to conclude with them an intelligent peace. . . . Because of nationalist feeling, of the blindness and haughty pride which has attacked the bourgeois parties, our advice was not listened to and everything collapsed. Thus the revolution came about."

While the Communists were inciting the proletariat to rebel, Social-democracy was crying, "Everyone to the polls!" The Socialists took the Assembly to Weimar, but the Communists demanded that it should be boycotted by every possible means. It did not require remarkable powers of prophecy to be able to predict stormy weather ahead. Five days after the Social-democratic manifesto the Spartacists were out in the streets. "Once more to arms!" was the cry. But this time the *putsch* was to be more dangerous; Spartacus was storing up energy for the coming fight. Noske, who in Kiel had gained a certain reputation for diplomacy, became the Commander-in-Chief of the Republican troops.

When the first Congress of the Councils of Workers and Soldiers dissolved the Executive Council, and elected a Central Council, thus eliminating all opposition, the Left-wing Independents, Spartacists and other kindred elements, created a considerable disturbance by refusing to accept the result of the voting. Among the sailors the cry went up: "We have been cheated! Once more into the streets!" And on the 5th of January they fulfilled that threat.

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The pretext for the rebellion was an attempt to dismiss the Chief of Police, Emil Eichorn, who differed fundamentally from the Government, but who refused to leave his post on that account. "Eichorn, by his Spartacist behaviour at Police headquarters, has become a danger to public law and order." His attitude, however, was uncompromising. "Never will I resign!" he said. "Only the revolutionary proletariat of Berlin, who placed me here on November 9th, when the present Government did not even exist, have the power to throw me out of this post."

And the Spartacists, the Berlin Independents and the revolutionary leaders in the factories, stated in a manifesto:

"The blow which is being aimed at the Berlin Chief of Police will affect the whole of the revolutionary German proletariat, and of German revolution."

In the same manifesto the workers were called on to demonstrate on Sunday, January 5th, against the Ebert–Scheidemann–Hirsch tyranny (Hirsch was Prussian Minister of the Interior at the time, and therefore Eichorn's chief).

The demonstration took place as arranged. At six in the even-

ing the crowd surrounded the red-brick building of the Police Headquarters in the Alexanderplatz, where they cheered the threatened Chief. But the meeting passed off without incident, and by nightfall some of the demonstrators went home. Other more warlike ones, however, marched to the "Fleet Street" of Berlin, and occupied by force the newspaper offices of Rudolf Mosse, Ullstein, Scherl and Büxenstein, and—needless to say—of the *Vorwärts*. This was a serious blow. On the eve of the elections the Republic, as its leaders realised, was probably in greater danger than at any time during its history.

In the presence of the Left-wing leaders, Spartacists, Independents, and trustworthy workers in the factories, Dorrenbach said on that same night that the division of Marines and the regiments in Berlin were ready to overthrow the Government. In Spandau there were 2,000 machine-guns and twenty cannon at the disposal of the revolutionaries. By sixty-four votes to six those present at the meeting agreed to carry on the movement which had begun with the occupation of the newspaper offices. "Events have proved", they said, "that the masses want revolution." Liebknecht asserted that the defeat of the Ebert–Scheidemann Government was not only possible, but necessary. Pieck, of the Communist Central Office, said, "We must begin the fight at once!" To which the old Ledebour replied, "Very well"; and Eichorn, "I submit to the resolution of the Assembly." A "Revolutionary Committee" of fifty-three, headed by Ledebour, Liebknecht and Paul Scholze, was to direct the movement, and if fortune should be kind, was to form a Government.

The Revolutionary Committee met in the Siegesallee; the Government in the Wilhelmstrasse. The Spartacists ended their manifesto with the words, "Down with the Ebert–Scheidemann Cabinet!" while the Social-democrats announced their intention of putting an end to the "armed bands of the Spartacist League". "Our patience is at an end," they said—a terrible warning from the lips of those in power.

The Socialist proletariat surrounded the Chancellery. Thousands of arms were raised in a gesture of defence of the Government, from whom they asked for weapons to protect the Republic. For the benefit of the Spartacists, Scheidemann promised that the Government, in view of the gravity of the situation, would arm the whole of the working-class sympathisers. The crowd, taking courage, shouted and cheered; then in serried ranks they marched through the town, still cheering. The revolutionary proletariat, behind Liebknecht, also set out on their march, and like two lines of human ants the two factions made their way through the main streets of Berlin. Suddenly, in the Leipzigerstrasse, they met face

to face. From one side came the cry, "Long live Democracy and Socialism, and down with the Spartacists and Liebknecht!" From the other, "Down with Scheidemann, down with Ebert, and long live the International revolution!" The two armies surveyed each other; which was the stronger? they asked themselves. The truth was that they were in a state of mutual fear—and as a consequence the encounter passed off without bloodshed. Nevertheless it seemed impossible that rebellion could be long deferred.

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Ever since the previous Sunday the Government had been accumulating reserves. They had made an urgent survey of the troops at their disposal; they were keeping up tension among the masses; and they were looking for a strong man, loyal to the new flag—the Republican, not the Socialist one—to place in command. The War Minister proposed General Hoffman for the task of establishing order, but this proposal was rejected by Ebert, who considered that the workers would look askance at such an appointment. Finally Noske was suggested, and the Central Council, and his comrades in the Government and the Party, unanimously conferred on him extraordinary powers. He was made no less than Governor-General of Berlin, on the civilian side, and Oberbefehlshaber, a kind of Captain-General, on the military. Coldly he said, "Someone has to be bloodthirsty. I do not refuse the responsibility."

This Social-democrat, who was later to be surprised by Hitler as Chief of Police in a provincial capital, left Berlin and set up his headquarters in Dahlem, where he made every preparation; not even Napoleon himself planned his campaigns with greater care. It was quite certain that Generalissimo Noske would have to make ready to face some thousands of armed workers prepared to die for the revolution.

The Chancellery was guarded by only a few men under the command of an officer, and was therefore in considerable danger, especially in view of the fact that the Spartacists had a good many machine-guns in their possession. Ebert realised that the situation was extremely critical; Noske was preparing the military occupation of Berlin, but the Government were by no means certain of victory. There was even talk of forming another Ministry outside Berlin if Ebert's Government should fall into the hands of the Spartacists.

On January 6th the revolutionaries began to entrench themselves in the Press quarter of Berlin. Calmly and leisurely, like workmen erecting scaffolding, or cinema men staging some scene for an historical film, they piled up their barricades. Machine-guns were placed in balconies and shop-windows. The houses of

Mosse and Ullstein were turned into solid fortresses. Newspaper rolls were used for defences. Finally the rebels dug up the pavements. Rarely can a revolution have been prepared with so much calm, and with less disturbance to the revolutionaries on the part of the Government forces.

Liebknecht, who was not given to under-estimating his chances of victory, but rather tended to exaggerate them, was certain that the Ebert Cabinet had not long to live. The Revolutionary Committee instructed an eight-page manifesto to be printed, which was to be published as soon as the Committee should temporarily assume the reins of government.

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The Communist rising began, as has been said, with the occupation of the bourgeois newspaper offices on Sunday, January 5th. On Monday the revolutionaries were dislodged from the Royal Stables, where Spartacus had set up its Staff headquarters, without a shot being fired. But by the Tuesday the Spartacists were in possession not only of the *Vorwärts* and the Press quarters, but also of the Reich Printing-Office, the Railway headquarters, the food warehouses in the Köpenickerstrasse, the Pioneers' headquarters in the same street, the Silesian Station, and other buildings. The War Ministry, however, did not fall into the hands of the revolutionaries, owing to the negligence of the leader of the attacking troops.

On the demand of Bernstein, a group of moderate Independents —among them Kautski, Breitscheid and Hilferding—opened immediate conversations with the rebels, but all attempts to conclude an armistice were in vain. The *putsch* lasted a week, during which time there was no break either in the firing or in the fruitless negotiations for peace.

Spartacus implacably continued the offensive. The Schiffbauerdamm Printing-Office, where a temporary *Vorwärts* was being published, was assaulted by the revolutionaries, who, needless to say, prevented the Social-democratic newspaper from appearing, and threw the freshly printed editions, ready for distribution, into the Spree.

The Reichstag was also occupied by the Spartacists.

The situation of the Ebert Government deteriorated hourly. On Wednesday the Ministry issued a manifesto stating, "Citizens: Spartacus is now fighting for complete power. If it triumphs, all personal liberty and security will vanish. Blood is being shed in various parts of Berlin. The hour for settling accounts is at hand!" This manifesto was answered by the *Rote Fahne* in the following words: "Today there is no charity for the Ebert Socialists; nothing but blows."

During the first days of the rising, the Government did not dare to launch its full strength against the revolutionaries, for fear that this should create a defection. The factory workers supporting Ebert had no desire to fight against the rebels—men with whom they had lived and worked, and who were also members of the proletariat. The Social-democratic workers therefore devoted all their energies to concluding an armistice, an armistice as much desired by them as it was likely to be rejected by the Communists.

The Government troops, on the other hand, attacked strongly, and not without difficulty they succeeded in retaking the Reichstag. Round the Brandenburger Tor bitter fighting took place, which resulted in a Spartacist defeat. Three regiments—the Reichstag, the Liebe and the Grautoff—fought resolutely for the Republic.

One thing was evident—that the Spartacists lacked a military plan and leadership. Nevertheless there were, in general, more Government losses than rebel ones.

On the evening of January 9th, Schulze's fusiliers recaptured the State Printing-Office, without causing any casualties. Under cover of darkness shots were fired from the house tops; the streets, deserted and at some strategic points dug up, were eloquent testimony of a merciless civil war. In the working-class districts guerilla fighting was the order of the day.

As far as tactics were concerned, Rosa Luxemburg had no great illusions, and, differing in this from Liebknecht, she foresaw a Government victory. Her fears were justified, for the Spartacists, in spite of their heroism and courage, were forced to withdraw.

Nevertheless the spirit of the Communists did not fail them for a single moment. Who dares to talk of surrender! When on January 10th a workers' delegation sent a friendly message to the revolutionaries in the magnificent edifice of the *Vorwärts*, asking them to renounce their uncompromising attitude, the latter replied: "Rather than surrender we will let ourselves be buried in the ruins of the building!"

On January 10th the whole of the revolutionary movement was concentrated in the Press district of Berlin, and round the Police headquarters. Eichorn had remained at his post as Chief of Police, but he had moved to the Bötzow Beer-Hall, from where he issued his commands and to a certain extent directed the leaderless insurrection.

The Government troops, who had been considerably weakened by their encounters with the Spartacists, dealt with the rising in the Press district. Here the fighting was particularly fierce, and both sides lost heavily.

Nowhere, however, was the struggle so dramatic as round the

Vorwärts offices. On the night of the 10th an attack was launched on the building by the Potsdam regiment, led by Commander von Stephani, a November 9th Republican, like nearly all the officers who were now fighting under the black, red and gold flag. Perhaps somewhat surprisingly, a Prince of the Catholic Hohenzollern–Sigmaringen line was a member of this regiment. The future of the German Republic could be foreseen in those January days of 1919.

The whole of the *Vorwärts* block, from the Lindenstrasse to the Jakobstrasse, had been fortified by the rebels. Machine-guns, placed close together, were drawn up in the windows giving on to the Lindenstrasse. In spite of everything, however, the defenders did not hold out long; tommy-guns were no match for cannon. The upper part of the building was destroyed, and the Communists capitulated. The democratic Hohenzollern of the Potsdam regiment was gaining ground.

The rebels had been dislodged from the *Vorwärts* and the Pioneers' headquarters in the Köpenickerstrasse, the Wolff Agency, the Ullstein, Mosse and Büxenstein Printing-Offices and the stations; and finally on the 12th the Police headquarters—last of the Spartacist fortresses—surrendered. On the Sunday Noske entered Berlin by the Potsdamerstrasse, at the head of 3,000 men—encountering no opposition, for Spartacus was already vanquished. During those seven days of civil war 156 men had been killed and hundreds wounded. The Monarchist myrmidons in charge of the Government troops avenged themselves on the Communist prisoners to the limits of their power. Of the rebels captured in the *Vorwärts* building, seven were sadistically maltreated and then shot in the courtyard of the Dragoon headquarters.

A Social-democratic historian has written of these January days: "After the crushing of the rebellion, the elections for the National Assembly were held without incident. Democracy found the way clear."

Once the *putsch* had been defeated, a wave of conscious hatred swept through the factions benefiting from the new régime. On January 13th the Executive Committee of the Independent Party of Greater Berlin advised their comrades to return to work. "Your self-denial", they said, "will remain for ever recorded in the history of the Berlin workers' movement." In these words one can hear the tone of resignation of the vanquished; words free from rancour but fraught with deep bitterness and sorrow. The reactionary Press, on the other hand, blazed with indignation. The executions in the Dragoon headquarters, the imprisonments, and the victims of the repression, were of little account to those who not long before had sent two million men to their deaths.

Ever since December, the "Republicanised" classes of the Empire had been counselling the assassination of Liebknecht, for which they had been denounced by Richard Müller in the Reichstag. One more ambition of the old militarist oligarchies was to be fulfilled. On the night of January 15th Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg were arrested in Wilmersdorft and taken to the Eden Hotel, which had been converted into a residence of Army leaders and officers. The order was given for them to be removed to Moabit Prison, but this was a mere deception, for the officers had already agreed on their assassination. Karl Liebknecht marched out first, escorted by Captain Pflugk-Hartung and various soldiers. As he stepped on to the pavement a sentinel, Otto Runge, aimed a fierce blow at his head with the butt of a rifle. Liebknecht put his hands to the wound, from which blood was pouring freely. He was forced into a waiting car, whose driver, on the pretext of engine trouble, drew up in the Tiergarten, where Liebknecht was riddled with bullets and left lying on the ground. At twenty past eleven that night, a man who subsequently protested ignorance of the occurrence, took the lifeless body to the Kutfürstendamm Infirmary. Captain Pflugk-Hartung justified his vile crime by saying that the Spartacist leader had tried to escape.

Rosa Luxemburg suffered a similar fate. After being ill-treated until she lost consciousness, she was placed in a car and shot. Lieutenant Kurt Vogel gave orders that the corpse should be thrown into the Landwehr Canal from the Liechtenberg Bridge, and only after many weeks were the remains found of that courageous, intelligent and self-denying woman.

This iniquitous dual crime aroused the whole proletariat of the world. The Berlin workers marched through the streets demanding justice, and the Government were accused of having planned the double assassination. The accusation was false, however, and Ebert, on hearing the terrible news, was as much astounded and distressed as anyone. Will the tragic death of Rosa Luxemburg and Liebknecht result in fresh struggles? Will they not, martyrs both, be a greater danger dead than alive? So meditated Ebert and the rest. They feared that the two victims would, like the Cid, win battles after their deaths. Were there not those who would see in the crime a bad omen for the new régime? If the Government were not directly responsible for the fresh assassination, were they not at least indirectly responsible to the extent of having handed over such important prisoners to the reactionary soldiery?

By this crime the Kaiser's men had attained a dual objective: they had partly discredited the Ebert Government and had at the same time removed two revolutionaries of outstanding influence.

Four officers were condemned to death, but the Tribunal gave them their freedom. Runge, who had beaten up the victims with his rifle, was sentenced to two years' imprisonment, Lieutenant Vogel to two years and four months. But the latter crossed the Dutch frontier with a false passport, and in the end only the private soldier was sent to prison.

On January 25th the remains of Karl Liebknecht were buried. All the Berlin workers followed his hearse, walking shoulder to shoulder. They marched silently, but in the depths of their souls they were more revolutionary than ever. Meanwhile the military assassins were enjoying the fruits of liberty. . . .

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

THE NEW OLD RÉGIME

According to the optimistic democrats the German Republic was on the march. In order to improve their position in the new régime, the bourgeoisie reorganised their Parties. The Conservatives and anti-Semites became the "German National People's Party", the Progressives the "German Democratic Party", the National-Liberals, the industrialist group under the leadership of Gustave Stresemann, the "German People's Party", and the Catholic Centre the "Christian People's Party". It should be noted that all these Capitalist Parties assumed popular or democratic titles. For many people this change of labels was, in fact, the revolution. The ingenuous Socialists were pleased to find so much populism and democracy in aristocratic circles which previously would have been ashamed to have inscribed on their banner any word acknowledging the existence of the people. Today all the "gentlemen" were democrats and Parliamentarians. After November 9th, 1918 was there anyone in Germany who did not sympathise with Socialism? If we read the contemporary Press of Krupp and of the great landowners, or if we listen to the Princes and the Army men, we get the impression that in Germany reaction was not only dead but that it could never be resuscitated.

In order to save their skins and their property, the German privileged classes hastened to demonstrate in favour of the new régime, which, needless to say, they were ready to respect and revere until such time as they could overthrow it. It is curious to listen to the words of the oligarchs during those revolutionary days.

Prince Leopold: "I am no Socialist, but a democrat. I always was."

A group of officers in the Berlin garrison: "To the officers of the garrison of Berlin and the environs: In view of the abdication of the Emperor, a new Government has been formed. The present task is to preserve law and order. It is the patriotic duty of a German officer to prevent bloodshed. The whole of our strength today is at the disposal of the German people."

The heir to the throne: "I give my word to do nothing against the Government."

Prince Eitel Friedrich: "I ask the comrades in the Potsdam garrison to place themselves at the disposal of the new Ministry. . . . We only wish good to our people and our country."

Prince Adalbert of Prussia: "I submit to the authority of the Government, which I will support with all my power."

Herr Wulle, later to become a leader of extreme Fascism: "Only the black, red and gold flag can save us."

The *Berliner Lokalanzeiger*, a paper of the extreme Right: "We must face realities. We therefore subscribe to the Government's programme."

The *Deutsche Tageszeitung*, journal of the great landowners: "Only a Government chosen by impeccable methods ensuring the triumph of the people's will can have any authority. . . . We repeat that there must be no disagreements among the German bourgeoisie, and that it must strongly support the Socialist Government."

(Until November 11th, 1918, the sub-title of the *Deutsche Tageszeitung* had been: "For the Kaiser and the Reich!")

The *Kreuz-Zeitung*, whose slogan had been before the revolution, "Forward, before God, for the Emperor and Country!" now spoke in the same terms.

No assistance offered by the followers of the ancient régime was refused by Social-democracy, except that of the Crown Prince, who thereupon left for Holland to console his father. As soon as he learnt, however, of the security and privileges which the members of his caste were enjoying in Germany, he returned to the Reich to work for his own cause.

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While the French troops, flushed with victory, were marching through the Arc de Triomphe, German soldiers were turning their weapons against the Prussian caste. For even those Socialists who termed Liebknecht a counter-revolutionary, believed in all good faith that the past would never return. In any other nation the moderate Socialists would have felt the same. Not all men know how to interpret historic events. Social-democracy in 1918–19 believed that its historic mission did not go beyond the formation of a Parliamentary State. The majority Socialists

expressed themselves clearly in their Six-Point Note to the Independents, and Social-democracy rejected a class dictatorship not supported by the entire people.

A minute examination of the situation in Germany immediately after the war, with the object of discovering whether or not a Communist revolution was feasible, would take up much time and space, and would be an almost useless digression. Suffice it to recall that Social-democracy fought the Communist revolution on principle, and not for tactical reasons—that is to say, the position of the Socialists, both of the majority group and the Right-wing Independents, was dogmatic: nothing beyond Parliamentary limits.

The elections for the Constituent Assembly marked the beginning of the democratic era in Germany. For the first time the German woman voted—to the advantage of the Socialist Parties. The Communists counselled abstention from voting, while the Independents of the Haase group went in a body to the polls. Social-democracy gained 11,500,000 votes, and 163 seats out of a total of 423, and was therefore easily the strongest Party in the House.

Within seven months the Constituent Assembly had drawn up a magnificent Constitution, which served as a model for other countries. This Weimar Constitution, a juridical achievement of the first order, gained international authority and renown for its author, Hugo Preuss.

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Within a capitalist régime it would, in fact, have been impossible to have gone farther than Germany went in social legislation. In three months the Government had placed 124 decrees before the National Assembly. In the sphere of political liberties, workers' rights, social security, etc., the Republican State began its work with great enthusiasm. But the régime of private property, including *latifundism* and the dictatorship of industry, was scarcely touched. The Socialists dreamed of a quiet and gradual transition, by means of an intelligent conversion of the Capitalist "conscience" to Socialism. Bolshevism was, for Social-democracy, the flower of a day. Italian Fascism was as yet unborn, the first offspring of international reaction. It is by no means surprising that German reformist Socialism should have envisaged a rosy future. But the German Social-democrats were by no means excellent prophets.

A State is planned by laws, but is built up, with time and effort, by actual practice. It can easily happen, however, that this tremendous task of construction is impeded from the beginning, if not entirely interrupted, by enemies of constitutional

revolution, and in Germany this phenomenon was soon evident. The elections for the National Assembly forced Social-democracy to collaborate in the Government with the Catholic Centre and the democrats. Shortly afterwards the Scheidemann Cabinet resigned, the new Premier being no longer even a Socialist, but a man from the Centre, Gustave Bauer. Later on the reins of government were to slip from the grasp of the Social-democrats and to fall into the hands of the great industrialists, Stresemann and Cuno. Bourgeoisie and Socialism were mutually tolerant, but the time came when the Socialists, masters of German destinies for a day, were at the mercy of the bourgeois parties. The former were like pawns in a game, moved on the tragic chess-board of the Reich at the will of industrial and landowning capitalism.

If we study the records of history, we find that the efficacy of revolutions is determined not by a speedy offensive, but by a conscientious and well-planned defensive. That is to say, before transforming the State, the reformer has to make a counter-revolution impossible. The German Socialists did not think of this, however, with the result that overnight the counter-revolution, powerful and enslaving, became stronger than the revolution itself.

Social-democracy, as we have already seen, suppressed the Communists, who it considered the only serious danger, while all the time the real enemy—the Imperial *camarilla* (both military and civil), the German bankers, Junkers and oligarchs—was quietly undermining the foundations of the new State. The Socialists mistook the lethargy of German Imperialism for its decease, and let themselves be deceived by the Parliamentary bait. Nothing had really changed, however; bureaucracy was the same as in the days of the Empire; the officers of the Kaiser's Army remained in command of the democratic one, and were even put in charge of the police. With such advisers and subordinates the Republican State became a pure abstraction.

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Repeated and violent disturbances soon proved that in Germany the revolution had been quite illusory. Counter-revolution had, in fact, already raised its head a few months after the foundation of the new régime. In January 1920 the Junker Kapp rebelled, supported by reaction in the form of an Army *putsch*. He succeeded in gaining power, while Ebert, the President of the Republic, escaped to Dresden. A general strike was unanimously decided on, however, and Kapp fled, hotly pursued by the workers. Between 1919 and 1929 the Hitler movement began as a reaction against Socialism, Parliament and the Versailles Treaty. And in November 1923 Hitler launched his *coup d'état* in Munich, an episode which will be recounted later.

It can be said today that between the war and the German civil war there was no lack of continuity whatsoever. The civil war was, without exception, the result of general discontent and a balance of opposing forces, and of the fact that an inadequate solution had been found for the revolutionary problem. Just as a broken bone which has been badly treated needs to be re-set, so the German revolution, because of the reappearance of the old oligarchies, needed to be modified. And as this change of front did not take place among the Social-democrats, who obstinately ignored the lessons of history, catastrophe was sooner or later inevitable. Counter-revolution would triumph. The fourteen years of the German Parliamentary régime were fourteen years of Parliamentary and democratic crisis.

The Rights, growing increasingly arrogant, competed in violence with the extreme Left. Class demands added fuel to the flames of the civil war. In 1923 Communists and Left-wing Socialists gained a majority in the Parliaments of Thuringia and Saxony; the time had come to carry out the Communist programme, and the bourgeoisie were in despair. The masses, jealous of their rights, rushed into the streets. Gustave Stresemann, leader of the great industrialists, was in power at the time, and there were Socialist Ministers in his Government. "Property is threatened in Saxony," screamed the bourgeois Press, and at once, against all law and reason, Government troops stepped in and suppressed the Communists and Left-wing Socialists. The Socialist Ministers left the Government, and in December Stresemann asked the Reichstag for extraordinary powers, which were granted him. German Parliamentarianism was finally and completely bankrupt.

While the Communists—and the Socialists too—were being suppressed, Nationalist bands were assassinating all those who had taken an outstanding part in the democratic revolution. The Centre politician Erzberger paid with his life for having signed the armistice. Rathenau, a democrat, died at the hands of the White terrorists. Haase fell in the Reichstag, mortally wounded by a madman. Kurt Eisner, the hero of Bavarian Socialism, was a victim of the reactionary fury of Count von Arco. No one asked for justice, which no longer existed in Parliamentary Germany. Sometimes the criminals were never discovered, but even when brought before the tribunal, they were absolved, or else sentenced and then pardoned. Some even rose to dizzy heights; in 1933 they were to be seen seated in the Reichstag, resplendent in uniform, among the National-Socialist group.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

VERSAILLES

On May 7th, 1919, the Paris Press, with the exception of the papers of the extreme Left, breathed the vengeance of the Furies. Nationalism roared and bellowed in every column. It was six months since the armistice had been signed, yet the Parisian mentality was still belligerent. Why did such a wave of hatred sweep through the French newspapers on that May morning? Why did the Press awaken the people of Paris with such strident clarions? The answer is that the day had come when the Allies in Versailles were to hand the Peace Treaty to the German delegates, and the French Nationalist Press had suddenly remembered that it was exactly four years since the sinking of the *Lusitania*.

In the great hall of the Trianon were gathered the representatives of twenty-seven nations, of the twenty-seven nations who had defeated the Central Empires. Presiding over, or rather commanding the ceremony, was Clemenceau, that implacable executioner of the vanquished. His yellowish face was impassive; even his mongol eyes and drooping moustache scarcely moved. His diseased hands, in their grey gloves, rested quietly on the table. On one side of him sat President Wilson, on the other Lloyd George.

Suddenly the master of the protocol announced: "*Messieurs les délégués allemands!*" The eyes of all the delegates turned to the door, through which entered Count Brockdorff-Rantzau, Foreign Minister of the Reich, followed by the rest of the German delegation: Landsberg, Giesbert, Leinert, Melchior, Schücking. All of them looked pale and worn. They took their allotted places, and in the midst of a solemn silence Clemenceau rose to speak. His voice was hard and sonorous, the voice of a careful orator, trained in the art of debate. His whole being was inflated with pride and satisfaction, and his metallic eyes shone like two points of fire. The "Tiger" was living through the supreme moment of his life.

"Gentlemen, Plenipotentiaries of the German Embassy," said the French Premier. "This is neither the time nor place for superfluous words. You have before you the accredited plenipotentiaries of the small and great Powers, united to fight together in the war that was so cruelly imposed upon them. The time has come when we must settle our accounts. You have asked for peace. We are ready to give you peace. We shall present to you now a book which contains our conditions. . . . To give you my thought

completely, you will find us ready to give you any explanation you want, but we must say at the same time that this second Treaty of Versailles has cost us too much not to take on our side all the necessary precautions and guarantees that this peace shall be a lasting one." [1]

Clemenceau had little more to add. Within a fortnight the Germans were to make any observations which they might consider pertinent. They were not to be allowed to enter into any oral discussions; the negotiations were therefore to be carried on in the form of notes.

As soon as the "Tiger's" short speech had been translated, the leader of the German delegation, Count Brockdorff-Rantzau, made his reply. Clemenceau had spoken standing; Brockdorff, a younger man, remained seated. "My speech was so long!" was his subsequent excuse.

"Gentlemen", he said, "we are deeply impressed at the sublime task which has brought us hither to give a durable peace to the world. We are not under illusions as to the extent of our defeat, and to the degree of our want of power. We know that the power of the German arms has broken. We know the power of the hatred which we encounter here. . . . It is demanded of us that we shall confess ourselves to be the only ones guilty of the war. Such a confession in my mouth will be a lie."

The German Delegation had no wish to free the Kaiser's Governments from all responsibility. "But we energetically deny", said Brockdorff, "that Germany and its people, who were convinced that they were making a war of defence, were alone guilty. . . . In the last fifty years the Imperialism of all the European States has chronically poisoned the international situation. . . . We repeat the declaration made in the German Reichstag at the beginning of the war, that is to say: 'A wrong has been done to Belgium, and we are willing to repair it.' . . . Crimes in war may not be excusable, but they are committed in the struggle for victory and in the defence of national existence, and passions are aroused which make the conscience of people blunt. The hundreds of thousands of non-combatants who have perished since November 11th by reason of the blockade were killed in cold deliberation. . . . The measure of guilt of all those who have taken part can only be stated by impartial inquest before a neutral commission. . . . We are not quite without protection. You yourselves have brought us an ally—namely, the right which is guaranteed by the Treaty."

Brockdorff went on to recall Wilson's Fourteen Points, which linked both sides, and spoke of the firm intention of the Germans

[1] Official translation.

"of rebuilding in common with you that which has been destroyed and of repairing any wrong that may have been committed . . . and of showing to mankind new aims of political and social progress. It will be our chief task", he added, "to re-establish the devastated vigour of mankind . . . by an international protection of life, health and the liberty of the working classes. . . . There is only one means of banishing the menacing danger of the irretrievable disorder of the whole European economical system—the economic and social solidarity of all peoples in a free League of Nations. Gentlemen, . . . the greatest progress in the development of mankind has been pronounced and will make its way. Only if the gates of the League of Nations are thrown open to all who are of goodwill can this aim be attained, and only then the dead of this war will not have died in vain. . . . The peace which cannot be defended in the name of right before the world always calls for new resistance against it. Nobody will be capable of subscribing to it with a good conscience, for it will not be possible of fulfilment. . . . We shall examine the document handed to us with good will, and in the hope that the final result of our interview may be subscribed to by all of us." [1]

Count Brockdorff-Rantzau had brought with him two speeches; one mild, the other firm and haughty. After hearing Clemenceau speak he decided to read the second.

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"The time has come when we must settle our accounts," the "Tiger" had said. What were the reactions of President Wilson and Mr. Lloyd George? Wilson had no illusions by this time as to the fate of his Fourteen Points. Lloyd George was to counsel moderation in the question of reparations. But it was clear that the men charged with the task of drawing up a new order in Europe were not masters of their own actions. The tyranny of vested interests ordered, and the statesmen, some with less enthusiasm than others, obeyed. The Peace of Versailles confirmed once more an ancient truth—that the men with the greatest aptitude for making war are not always spiritually the best equipped for making peace. There was at the time no lack of prophets to foretell the failure of the Versailles policy. But the tragic aspect of that tragi-comedy was that even the seers were forced to behave like blind men.

The smaller Powers who had fought on the side of the stronger nations were given the right to state their opinion on the peace treaties, although only France, Great Britain, Italy and the U.S.A. were allowed to make the decisions. The truth was that the Allies themselves, although united in their scheme to destroy

[1] Official translation.

Germany, were in disagreement over the interesting question of the share of the booty. Italy created a serious problem by her complaint that she had not been given what she was promised in the 1915 Treaty of London. The Italians, French and Japanese showed their displeasure at the distribution of the colonies, the majority of which, in one form or another, remained in the control of the British Empire. And this lack of unity among the Allies, inevitable in any share-out of conquered territory, was to be ultimately responsible for the failure of the Versailles policy.

The aim of this policy was to destroy Germany as a Great Power. This meant, on the one hand, blotting out from the Reich every vestige of militarism, and, on the other, shattering German economy. Belgium acquired the frontier districts of Eupen and Malmédy; the Saar Mines were transferred to France, and the Saar district was placed under the mandate of an International Commission for fifteen years, at the end of which time a plebiscite was to be taken. France recovered Alsace-Lorraine, with its 2 million inhabitants, its excellent strategic situation, and its 75 per cent. of German iron production. The southern part of Silesia, with its industries and mines, was ceded to Poland, who also gained, through the famous corridor, an outlet to the sea. The northern part of Schleswig was transferred by plebiscite to Denmark.

Germany lost some 6 million inhabitants, and a considerable amount of raw materials.

The distribution of the German colonies in Africa among the Allies was carried out in the following manner: The Cameroons were divided between France and Great Britain; Togoland was given to Britain, and Western Africa to Britain and Belgium.

In the Pacific, Japan received the Marshall Islands and the Shantung Peninsula in China. Samoa was given to New Zealand, New Guinea to Australia, and the island of Nauru to Britain.

It is only fair to say that the German colonies were not, for the most part, handed over to their new owners outright, but in the form of a mandate from the League of Nations, which was to exercise rights of fiscalisation. In practice there was little difference between this system and the old one of unconditional appropriation, but there can be no doubt that the new juridical situation of these colonial territories showed that in one further respect the Versailles Treaty was a considerable improvement on former Peace Covenants.

The Allies also took their precautions in the strategic sphere. All the left bank of the Rhine, and the right bank for a space of 50 kilometres, were made into a permanently demilitarised zone. The left bank, with three bridge-heads, was to be occupied

by the Allies for fifteen years, in guarantee of Germany's fulfilment of the Treaty. The fortifications and naval establishments on the island of Heligoland were to be destroyed.

The disarmament of Germany was undertaken immediately. The Allies seized 5,000 cannon, 30,000 machine-guns, 3,000 mine-throwers, 2,000 aeroplanes, 100 submarines and eight cruisers. As far as the Army was concerned, Germany was allowed a voluntary force of 100,000 men—a concession due, no doubt, to a desire that future Reich Governments should have at their disposal an instrument of repression in the event of a proletarian rising.

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Where the Allies went seriously wrong, however, was in the field of reparations. Very early in the day Mr. J. M. Keynes had foretold the disturbing consequences which these reparations would have on international finance.

As a beginning, the victors demanded the immediate payment of a sum of 20,000 million gold marks. The total amount to be paid by the Reich was to be fixed at another Conference in May 1921.

In order to assist Germany, payment in kind was arranged. Great Britain was compensated for her lost shipping in merchant ships—tonnage for tonnage and class for class. The Belgians began to receive payment in cattle, while the French were given 5,000 locomotives, 150,000 railway waggons, 10,000 lorries and 140,000 milch cows.

In May 1921 the Allies handed in their final bill of 132,000 million gold marks for reparations. This was equivalent to 6,000 million sterling, and Mr. Keynes calculated that the most Germany could pay would be 2,000 million.

The war and the Versailles Treaty created chaos in Germany, which lasted from 1919 to 1923. Inflation rose to proportions hitherto unknown in the history of the world. Five *coups d'état* took place, and anti-Semitism reached its highest point, during this period. Bolshevism, Separatism, Nationalism, invasion by the French troops: the Reich had become an immense Bedlam. The people were literally starving, not only because the victorious Powers prolonged the blockade after the armistice, but also because cattle, locomotives and anything else considered desirable by way of indemnity and compensation had been taken away. The less scrupulous German capitalists, such as Stinnes, speculated in the hunger of the masses. The situation was desperate. Hitler and Ludendorff launched their *putsch*, believing that the hour had struck. But it was too soon.

In such conditions it was impossible for a Republican régime to consolidate itself in Germany. France thought that the Reich

was not fulfilling her obligations, and in the spring of 1920 she invaded the city of Frankfurt, and in 1921 three districts of the Ruhr. Lastly, on January 11th, 1923, General Degoutte, at the head of 60,000 men, occupied the whole of that industrial region, on the orders of Poincaré. Resistance was soon organised, even the workers themselves taking part, supported by the employers. French troops machine-gunned the men in the Krupp factories, killing thirteen and wounding thirty. Acts of sabotage against the forces of occupation increased daily. One of the saboteurs was Schlageter, who was shot by the French and later elevated by Hitlerism to the rank of national hero.

The French and Belgian occupation of the Ruhr was a grave mistake. It incensed the Germans, without giving France her desired economic advantage, since the opposition of the native population made successful exploitation of the Ruhr industries almost impossible. Another and perhaps more serious consequence of Poincaré's policy was the widening of the breach between France and Great Britain—the beginning of the end of the Versailles Treaty, which could only be upheld if the Allies remained united in an anti-German front. The London Government, which was already beginning to feel misgivings concerning the increasing power of France in Europe, sent a note to the Paris Government in August 1923 declaring the occupation of the Ruhr illegal. It was obvious that the Versailles policy, whether just or unjust, could not be prolonged much longer. Everybody wanted peace. Business men, tired of uncertainty, longed for European stability. The people of every country were weary of troop movements and the sound of gun-fire.

The Allies, on the other hand, began to fear the work of their creation. Germany was the hen laying the golden eggs, and they were on the point of killing her. One blunder led to another. In fact, the greatest blunder of the whole of the post-war period, in the opinion of the writer, was committed during that time. But before coming to that let us study Article 231 of the Versailles Treaty.

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This Article states that Germany was solely responsible for the war—a statement which no student of international problems today can accept unquestioningly. As a perusal of diplomatic documents will show, the *immediate* blame for the last war must be imputed to all the belligerents, and, in my opinion, in the following order: Austria, Russia, France, Germany and Great Britain. The first Power to mobilise was Russia. Neither Wilhelm II nor Sir Edward Grey wanted war *at that moment*. If any three men were dominated by evil spirits during the

diplomatic crisis of July 1914, they were Count Berchtold, Poincaré and Iswolski. "Poincaré: war!" had been the cry in the French Chamber. The chief responsibility for the ultimate catastrophe rests, therefore, with Vienna, St. Petersburg and Paris. Berlin's share of the immediate blame was a lesser one, and London's was the smallest of all. Vienna, St. Petersburg and Paris did all they could to hasten hostilities; Berlin very little to avoid them, and London everything possible to prevent them. That was in the stormy days of July.

But long before the war-clouds broke, they had already piled up, dark and threatening, in the European sky. Truly did the German Count say in his speech at Versailles: "In the last fifty years the Imperialism of all the European States has chronically poisoned the international situation." The more remote causes of the catastrophe were Austria-Hungary's fear of the expansion of Serbia, a small but active and ambitious kingdom, which—so it was believed in Vienna—was, with the encouragement of St. Petersburg, undermining the foundations of the dual monarchy; Germany's desire to dominate the Balkans, to extend her power in the East to Bagdad, to control world commerce and to own the most powerful fleet in the world; the dream of the Russian Czar of capturing Constantinople and dominating the Straits; the revengeful spirit of France, who had never forgiven Germany for the defeat of 1871 or the annexation of Alsace-Lorraine; the British fear that Germany would capture the markets of the world; and, above all, the rapid development of the German Navy. All five Powers had reasons for not rejecting a war, for all five were beset by problems for which there was no peaceful solution. Austria and Germany feared a pan-Slav agitation in the Balkans, which, if successful, would benefit Russia. France, Great Britain and Russia went in dread of the growth of the German colossus. Sooner or later the problem must be resolved by violence, and the lining-up of the belligerents had already taken place at the beginning of the century. The Entente Cordiale of 1904 and Sir Edward Grey's letter in November 1912 encouraged France not to fear a war. The Franco-Russian Alliance confirmed St. Petersburg in its warlike optimism. The *carte blanche* given by the Kaiser to Count Berchtold to proceed against Serbia strengthened Austria in her resolution. All the Powers had reason to believe that they would win the war, for their respective military strengths were well balanced.

To any historian dealing with the causes of the last war, the most interesting point will doubtless be the enmity between Germany and Britain. This violent clash of interests between the two countries made possible not only the Entente Cordiale,

but—what was even more unexpected—a *rapprochement* between London and St. Petersburg. Times had changed considerably since 1870.

After Waterloo Great Britain began to exchange her fear of France for that of Russia. The Anglo-French war was followed by Anglo-Russian tension. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries Great Britain became the ally of Germany and the enemy of France and Russia, whom she fought. But after 1870, like a monstrous spectre from the underworld, Germany rose up as Britain's latest and most fearful enemy. It was then that London began to seek the friendship of Paris and St. Petersburg. By 1905 tension between Great Britain and Germany was already manifest.

To a superficial observer Germany's emergence as a great Power on the European Continent, the almost continuous scène of implacable rivalries, must appear less serious than, for instance, the appearance of Napoleonic France as an all-absorbing Imperialism. Once again it was necessary for Great Britain to redress the balance of power in Europe, as she had been consistently doing throughout her history, and more particularly since the reigns of William III and Anne, and the War of the Spanish Succession. But difficulties are made to be overcome, and she would deal with them as she had dealt with so many others. It was on those lines that the phlegmatic British reasoned, and it was that which gave them confidence and aplomb. The German problem, however, was in reality much more difficult of solution than the British supposed. Germany was, in fact, reviving in Europe the tragic conflict of Rome and Carthage. It was not only the European balance of power which was threatened, but the very life of England, the physical existence of the British people, the future of civilisation itself.

The last serious threat to Great Britain had been that of Napoleonic Imperialism, to which Britain, in alliance with Prussia, put an end at Waterloo. What did Bonaparte hope for? On what strength could he rely in his struggle with Britain? The social strength which served the hero of Toulon in this conflict was the same which had aided the Generals of the Convention: the identification of themselves as the saviours of the Revolution, against which Britain, an ally of the feudal princes, had taken up arms. Napoleon continued the defence of the French Revolution; in order to consolidate itself it had to spread over the whole of Europe, for the Rights of Man could not be successfully established in one Continental country alone. That is to say, the destruction of British hegemony was not for Napoleon a biological necessity; all that he needed to do was to prevent the

British from becoming an obstacle to the consolidation of the middle-class régime in Europe. Napoleon personally was pursuing an entirely banal objective—that of placing his relations on the thrones of Europe. The man of Austerlitz therefore embodied two desires which were perfectly compatible with the existence of Great Britain as an Empire and a powerful nation: the desire (in spite of his monarchical extravagances) to consolidate the French Revolution, and the lust for personal power. Compared with the subsequent German threat, Napoleon was nothing more than a false alarm.

The French menace to Great Britain really disappeared after the fall of the self-appointed Emperor. With a change of Government in France came a change of policy *vis-à-vis* Great Britain, for there was nothing fundamental in the structure of the French nation to make a clash with that country inevitable. A French Empire could exist peaceably side by side with a British Empire. In the world markets the French were selling articles which were not manufactured by the British, and vice versa. Napoleon was not fighting for markets, but to found a dynasty, and to prevent Britain, Austria and Germany from entering Paris and restoring the Bourbon line. His ambition to reach India, like his Egyptian campaign, was an idealist gesture, the product of a fevered mind eager for glory. France could live without India and without the destruction of Great Britain.

The same cannot, however, be said of capitalist Germany—hence the Punic nature of the wars of 1914 and 1939. Germany did not go to war on either occasion to consolidate a new State or a revolution, but in order to establish a more or less direct domination over Europe. In this her object was three-fold: to gain markets for her industries, room for her population, and soldiers for Prussian officialdom, which was eager to establish the dominion of German militarism throughout the world. It may, in fact, be said that ever since the end of the nineteenth century Germany's one desire has been to turn the world into a huge market for her industries, and Europe into an immense Army barracks commanded by Prussian officers.

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How did Germany rise to her position as a great Power? She is not rich in natural resources; 12·83 per cent. of her soil is completely sterile. Only 40 per cent. of her land is devoted to agriculture; the rest consists of woods and pasturage. Foodstuffs represent 27 per cent. of German imports, and Germany imports 35 per cent. of her wheat consumption.

German sub-soil is also very poor, save in coal, of which the country produces 5·4 per cent. of the world output. There are

scarcely any other raw materials in the Reich. If one excepts Alsace-Lorraine, the German production of iron is insignificant.

It is industry, however, which has made the country so powerful. While Germany was an agricultural nation there was no "German problem" in Europe; she was neither more nor less aggressive than other nations, and her small population, scattered over a large number of States, corresponded to her economic resources, which were modest. But ever since the middle of the nineteenth century industry between the Baltic and the Rhine has expanded tremendously—with the considerable assistance, according to Professor Adolf Weber, of British capital. By 1875 this expansion had become rapid and feverish, and between 1875 and 1914 Germany lived through a period of prosperity hitherto unknown in that country. During those thirty-nine years the population increased from 41,000,000 to 68,000,000. The birth-rate was very high during the whole period, with a maximum figure of 42·6 per 1,000 and an average of 36 per 1,000. The same phenomenon occurred during the industrial expansion of Britain, but in Germany it was even more dynamic. In 1875 the urban population of Germany was 39 per cent. of the whole; in 1925 64 per cent. In the latter year the number of agricultural workers was 9,762,000 and of industrial workers 13,402,000. Since 1907 the number of men and women engaged in industry has increased by 26·8 per cent.

By an evil chance which must be attributed to the conditions of German soil and sub-soil, which are similar to those of Great Britain, German industry has progressed along the same lines as the British. In both cases the poverty of the land has forced the inhabitants to develop applied chemistry, and their large coal deposits have resulted in the development of powerful iron and steel industries. Neither Germany nor Great Britain can live without exports. And both countries export the same kind of articles! (France, on the other hand, with her luxury industries and wine trade, her balance between industry and agriculture, and her proportionate number of inhabitants, has the healthiest national economy of the whole of Europe.)

In order to study the problem created by Germany for Europe and the whole world at the end of the nineteenth century, it is essential to define the phenomenon accurately. It is impossible to effect a cure if the diagnosis is false. As has already been said, while Germany was an agricultural country she did not constitute any insoluble problem for Europe. Prussian militarism, originating with Frederick the Great, did not prevent Great Britain from allying herself with Prussia in the Seven Years' War, nor Blücher, the Hindenburg of Waterloo, from collaborating successfully with

Wellington in the final defeat of Napoleon. This militarism did not represent a threat to Europe, nor did it become really dangerous until it received the tremendous dynamic impetus of the industrialisation of the Reich. Even as late as 1871 Germany had no plans for world domination. At the Peace of Frankfürt Bismarck was satisfied with Alsace-Lorraine and an indemnity of 4,000 million marks, which France paid at once by selling foreign securities. German Imperialism, in the virulent form in which we know it, developed during the period of industrial expansion, and it was industrial expansion which made Germany into a State of 70 million inhabitants. And Prussian militarism received all its aggressive strength from industry and the increase of the population. Who feared this militarism as an expansionist factor while Germany was an agricultural nation?

By the beginning of the present century the stage was set for the unfolding of the historic drama. If the careful observer looks behind the European chaos he will see that the collision was, primarily, a struggle between Great Britain and Germany. As has already been said, neither country can live without exporting. Germany started late in the race for markets, however, and any gains she makes must be at the expense of Britain. And in the latter country competition must necessarily endanger the standard of living of the people. The position of Great Britain has therefore been a tragic one ever since the rise of German Imperialism. Even more tragic, however, is the position of Germany. For the British can permit themselves the luxury of an unfavourable trade balance, because their balance of payments is favourable. That is to say, Great Britain lives on the income from British capital invested abroad, and from the brokerage which she receives as an international financial agent. Germany, on the other hand, having no income, is obliged to export, and as she imports an enormous amount of foodstuffs and raw materials, she has to sell more than she buys, or go bankrupt. The necessity for markets has, therefore, been a vital and urgent one for Germany ever since her population became too large to be supported by German agriculture and commerce.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, Germany began a commercial struggle with Great Britain, while at the same time making preparations for a "shooting war". It is only fair to say that so long as the conflict remained on the plane of commercial competition, Great Britain had no intention of fighting Germany. But when the Reich declared that it was going to rule the seas, Anglo-German relations took a more serious turn.

There is a measure of truth in the British thesis that Germany was responsible for the first great war. The mere fact of planning

to build a fleet superior to, or at least as powerful as, the British, represented an obvious aggression against Great Britain, for once an island has lost control of the seas its power is lost. And the British Island could not sit back and wait quietly for some other nation to build a stronger navy than its own, for that would have meant unconditional surrender. To this extent it can be said that Germany attacked Great Britain, not when she invaded Belgium, but years earlier, when she conceived the idea of sweeping her rival from the seas.

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The men of Versailles asked themselves what was to be done with Germany. That was indeed the question. There can be no doubt that they blundered. But the word "blunder" is not enough to describe what happened at Versailles. They not only blundered: they dealt with the German problem in the very worst possible way.

It is of little interest today whether or not Germany could have paid the bill of 132,000 million gold marks which the Allies presented to her in May 1921. Skilful economists, such as J. M. Keynes, have maintained that the sum was excessive. The main point is that Germany did not effect her reparation payments. The Allies then decided to change the system, and drew up the famous Dawes Plan, which provided for a reduction in the amount of the payments, and a loan to German industry of 5,000 million dollars. The object of this plan was obvious: to set the wheels of German industry moving in order that Germany should be able to satisfy her financial obligations. No greater absurdity can be imagined. For what the Allies did, in fact, was to reconstruct German industry, which immediately set about dislodging Great Britain from world markets. And the closing of those markets to Germany in return was to result in the collapse of German economy, and in further revolution and war.

By 1929 Germany had paid RM.8,000 million in reparations, but had received in return RM.14,000 million in the form of loans. In practice, therefore, the Allies paid German reparations for some years with their own money.

In time, of course, German disbursements exceeded receipts. By 1932 the total paid by the Reich amounted to RM.72,000 million.

All the great German industries received loans from the United States, apart from the Dawes Loan. Nearly all the countries who were in a position to do so lent Germany money. In 1930 the private debts of the Reich (apart, of course, from reparations) amounted to RM.34,000 million.

With all this money, and in agreement with the Allies, Germany

reconstructed her industry and ended by erecting industrial machinery far superior in strength and quality to that of 1913. By 1927 her average monthly production of iron ore and steel amounted to 1,136 million tons and 1,395 million tons respectively, as against 1,397 million tons and 1,429 million tons in 1913. And by 1933 the 1913 figures had been far surpassed.

An authoritative economist has written concerning the expropriations of the German iron and steel industries in Alsace and Lorraine (which were reconstructed in Germany with French money):

> "This reconstruction of the iron and steel works, forced upon the German owners by the French Government, is one of the causes contributory to the crisis in the iron and steel of the world, caused by the erection of too many plants."

It was clear that there was no solution to "the German question" apart from a revolution of the whole of international economy. And it was equally clear that another great war was inevitable.

The German threat to Europe could not and did not end with the fall of the Kaiser. It was not Wilhelm II, nor certain ideas of the time, which caused the war in Europe. A purely political change of régime could not have affected the situation, since any German Government, however pacific it might have been, would still have been obliged to feed 70 million Germans, and to do so—within a capitalist system—would have had to export a large part of the enormous industrial production of the country. And a régime which did not fulfil the Imperialist demands of industry must have collapsed. Only in an anarchical world could anyone conceive the absurd contradiction of despoiling Germany of colonies and European territories, while at the same time assisting her to rebuild her industry. The proper course would have been to have reformed the international economy. But when an attempt was made at Versailles to abolish tariffs on raw materials, vested interests immediately set about to defeat it.

The truth is that capitalism could not resolve "the German problem". And the wise men of Versailles were acting under the influence of forces outside their control.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

NATIONAL SOCIALISM

THE WAR had disrupted the whole of European economy. Four and a half years of violent struggle had undermined the foundation of powerful monarchies. The Austro-Hungarian

Empire, the Prussian Monarchy, Czarism, régimes which in 1914 seemed eternal—at least to their representatives—collapsed like a pack of cards. Revolution broke out in the conquered countries, not only because defeat had increased their misery, but also because the politico-military failure had deprived the ruling classes of all authority. Russian Socialism began the European revolutionary movement with the dethroning of the Czar, and at once the Bolshevists seized the reins of government. It was obvious that the European peoples were no longer in agreement with the political revolution, with the Republic; they wanted a social revolution and the establishment of Socialism. In Bavaria a Red Government was set up. In Hungary in 1919 the Communists, under Bela Khun, seized power. In Italy in 1920 workers occupied the factories. Mustafa Kemal Ataturk destroyed the old Turkey of the Sultans. And even in Spain, which had remained neutral, there was an attempt in 1917 to overthrow the Monarchy. During the first post-war years revolution stalked abroad. Italy was one of the victorious Powers, but her triumph had been purely nominal; her economy was disorganised, her industries paralysed, and misery widespread, for the war had aimed a terrible blow at her middle classes, as it had at those of the defeated countries. Besides this, she had left Versailles with a strong feeling of resentment and inferiority.

For the discontented nations the peace was, paradoxically, the beginning of the civil war. On the manner in which this civil war was to end depended the immediate future of Europe. The proletariat was internationalist, and longed for peace. Defeat had been a terrible blow to the pride of the bourgeoisie, the Army and the old castes, and the large German fortunes had been lost or considerably impaired. The war ruined the classes who had previously lived in prosperity, and who had governed the people according to their whims and pleasure. And as though the humiliation and impoverishment created by the war were not enough, here was the proletariat ready to give them the *coup de grâce*. The social revolution had come to put an end to what remained of private property, and to proclaim internationalism. Reaction was not long, however, in awakening. And as was to be expected, it was of a dual nature. The reactionaries could not hope to win over the masses with programmes of the old kind, nor could they appeal to the middle classes. Society had become proletarianised. It was essential, therefore, to promise wide social reforms. And, in the opinion of the reactionaries, these social reforms—of a socialist nature—must be carried out within a national framework. For internationalism, if victorious, would frustrate the desire for vengeance which had filled the hearts and

minds of the ruling classes ever since their humiliation and defeat. It was therefore urgently necessary to fight Socialism as a collectivist doctrine and an internationalist creed.

The new régime triumphed first in Italy. Italian Fascism had taken root during that economic upheaval after the war which had given Italy the appearance of a conquered nation. The Italian Trades Union movement, considerably tainted with Anarchist Trades Unionism, committed a series of tactical blunders, which frightened the bourgeoisie without at any time seriously threatening the capitalist system. The Socialists were divided, and did not know what they wanted. They were neither carrying out a revolution nor appointing Ministers to a Government. The capitalists were saying to the workers, "Go ahead with the revolution or leave us in peace!" The constitutional régime had therefore arrived at an *impasse*—there was never a single Socialist Minister in Italy—which the King overcame by handing the power to Mussolini. The latter, always a partisan of a strong State, deserted Socialism and created the Fascist movement, with the support of the ex-Service man and that considerable social group of *déclassés*, people who had lost their profession, and were drifting aimlessly through life as the result of the war. These desperate masses formed in Italy the social basis of Fascism. Of a similar stamp were those who flocked to the banner of National-Socialism. In short, Fascism was the type of counter-revolution to be expected in a proletarianised nation where the middle classes had disappeared under the immense burden of taxes and other necessities of war.

Ever since Mussolini came to power in October 1922, German National-Socialism had been in contact with Italian Fascism. Hitler sent agents to the Fascist leader—one of whom was Ludecke—asking for moral and financial support for the German movement. The Italians, according to Ludecke, replied that they could not lend any money, but that as far as everything else was concerned—propaganda, diplomacy, etc.—they would not be sparing in their support of the Nazi Party.

One of the differences between Fascism and National-Socialism is that the former received its main impulse in Italy from the upper middle classes and the industrialists—in opposition to the Army, which had no sympathy for the movement, and which rallied round Mussolini some long time after the industrialists; whereas in Germany the real founder of National-Socialism was the Army, the Reichswehr, industry only coming to Hitler's support much later, when the Nazi movement was already so strong that it could scarcely be contained. This difference in the origins of Fascism and National-Socialism is entirely logical. The

Italian Army had not suffered the humiliation of a final defeat, nor was it affected by the Treaty of Versailles. On the other hand, this Treaty had destroyed the whole of the German military organisation. It was the Italian Imperialists, capitalists and romantics such as d'Annunzio, who most strongly resented the terms of the peace, but this resentment did not extend to the armed forces. Badoglio expressed a lofty contempt for the Fascists; Ludendorff, however, was at Hitler's side in the 1923 *putsch*. Versailles, in short, had dealt a blow to Italian capitalism —which was eager to expand—without offending the Italian Army. As far as Germany was concerned, however, the Army had been far more seriously "offended", both morally and materially, than German capitalism.

In the Germany of 1919 there occurred the phenomenon of social quackery, a phenomenon which is inevitable in all countries passing through an historic crisis. An enormous number of political sects sprang up, each claiming to be able to cure the nation of all its ills. One of these sects, consisting of forty individuals, was the Deutsche Arbeiter-partei (German Workers' Party), which had been founded by an out-of-work turner, Anton Drexler. In contact with Drexler and his group was a man interested in economic questions, who had, at one of the meetings, succeeded in impressing Adolf Hitler with his arguments. Hitler had served at the front during the war, and afterwards remained in the volunteer Army in Munich as a *gefreiter*, a kind of superior private who enjoys certain privileges. He practised oratory by making speeches to the soldiers in the barracks, but his official task was to attend political meetings—and in Munich at the time there were meetings of all kinds—as an informer or spy. The Reichswehr, through such means, kept its fingers on the pulse of public opinion. Hitler's immediate chief was Captain Röhm, leader of the political section of the General Staff of von Epp, Reichswehr Commandant in Bavaria.

The atmosphere of the Deutsche Arbeiter-partei attracted Hitler, and he finally joined it, immediately becoming leader of this tiny movement.

There is no doubt that Hitler made his debut in German politics as an agent of the Reichswehr, and that the German National-Socialist Workers' Party—the name which Hitler gave to the Drexler group—was an offshoot of the Army.

Under Hitler's guidance the movement quickly developed. Gottfried Feder drew up the programme of the Party, and Gregor Strasser, leader of the National ex-combatants in Bavaria, placed his troops at its disposal. Those troops became the Sturm-

Abteilung (S.A.), armed by the Reichswehr, and serving as shock troops to the movement.

The Party could not have prospered as it did without economic assistance, and here again it was the Reichswehr, not the industrialists, who first gave their help. The Army men had discovered in Hitler an ideal agitator, a man who understood "the problem" from the Army point of view. And Röhm, representing the Reichswehr, took it upon himself to see that Hitler did not lack funds. In this way the ex-corporal was able to turn one of the many political sects in Germany at the time into a dangerous party, to clothe and support the S.A., and to acquire a factor essential for propaganda—the Press. With Reichswehr money Hitler bought the *Völkischer Beobachter*, a fortnightly publication, and turned it into the daily paper of National-Socialism.

The Hitler movement was frankly demagogic. From the beginning it deceived the masses, for it promised a social revolution which few National-Socialist leaders took seriously. Hitler knew that without a programme of a completely social nature he would never win the people over, nor steal the thunder of Socialism and Communism—hence his promise of Socialism for the German people, a Socialism *sui generis*, compatible with the most aggressive Nationalism.

The Nazi programme consisted of twenty-five points, some of which it might be interesting to notice here. The famous document begins by saying that it must be taken as a provisional programme, since National-Socialism aspires to a wider revolution than that mentioned in the twenty-five Points. Its essentials are given below.

1. We demand in the name of national conscience the union of all Germans in a great Germany.

2. We demand the complete annulment of the Treaties of Versailles and St. Germain.

3. We demand land in order to feed our people, and colonies for our surplus population.

4. Only the German may be a citizen. Only those with German blood in their veins may be German subjects. Thus the Jews cannot be German citizens.

10. The first duty of every German citizen is to create, intellectually or manually. The activity of the individual must not in any way prejudice the interests of the community, but must develop within the limits of general utility.

11. We demand the suppression of income not proceeding directly from intellectual or manual work, and the complete abolition of the tyranny of interest on capital (*Zinsknetchschaft*).

13. We demand the nationalisation of the large trusts.

14. We demand a sharing-out of industrial profits.

17. We demand a radical agrarian reform which shall satisfy national needs, and the passing of special measures for the free distribution of land in the interests of public utility.

22. We demand the licensing of a professional Army and the constitution of a national Army.

24. The Party admits the fundamental principles of Christianity, without tending towards any particular cult; it fights the Judeo-Marxist spirit within and without the movement, and is convinced that the people will not be able to throw off the influence of this spirit unless they uphold the following principle: The goods of all for the good of each.

25. In order to achieve all the objectives which we have set out above, the Central Power of the Reich must be strong, and the Central Parliament, to which all German States and all State institutions are subject, must enjoy absolute authority.

A Party which (in Points 13 and 14 of its programme) demands nationalisation of industry and the expropriation of profits, must, in principle, be held suspect by the great capitalists. Point 17, with its demand for agrarian reform and the division of land, represented a threat to the great landowners, the Junkers. The Reichswehr, however, had nothing to fear (the programme, in fact, might have been drawn up in the barracks), since the demand for a national Army (Point 22) and the annulment of the Treaties of Versailles and St. Germain (Point 2) were in direct response to the immediate ambitions of militarism.

Mussolini, who from the very beginning needed the help of the industrialists, took care not to publish any programme, still less one which would sow suspicions among the bourgeoisie. No doubt the Italian *condottiere* preferred to dispense with any definite policy and to alter his plans as circumstances demanded.

Hitler was never very seriously preoccupied with social problems. His strong political instinct, however, told him that racialism and pan-Germanism were not enough to conquer the masses—hence his demagogy. The Fascist experiment in Italy had influenced the formation of the German National-Socialist movement more than is commonly believed. Hitler carefully followed the march of events in Rome, and incorporated in his Party the essential content of Mussolini's policy and the ideas pronounced by the Fascist leaders in their writings and speeches. For some time the Nazis considered the creation of a corporate State, and carried out propaganda to this end in their Press.

Hitler declared himself an admirer of Mussolini, a photograph of whom was placed in his study in the Brown House at Munich.

For Hitler, Nationalism was the noun and Socialism merely the adjective. What is more, all his ideas were in opposition to the Socialist concept; any kind of Socialism, national or international, was repugnant to him. He soon came into conflict, therefore, with the group of Nazis who ingenuously believed that the Party intended to carry out its programme, and who, while repudiating internationalism, placed the social factor before the national. Otto Strasser's break with Hitler in 1930 began with the violent anti-Socialism of the Führer. In point of fact, Hitler deplored having had to devise an ambiguous programme. When Strasser reminded him in 1930 that the Party represented "National Socialism", Hitler replied in some confusion, "That word 'Socialism' is the trouble." In the eyes of the leader, Strasser's National-Socialism was pure Marxism.

What there was of sincerity in the Nazi programme, and what the majority of the leaders proposed to carry out, were Points 1, 2, 4, 22 and 25—a great Germany, the destruction of the Versailles Treaty, a powerful Army, and anti-Semitism.

The Jews were to be the propitiatory victims, the scapegoat of the Nazi religion.

Every nation has its negative *pathos*, its psychic infirmities. The negative characteristics of the German nation are racialism and brute force. But such psycho-pathological conditions need to develop in special circumstances if they are to invade the whole social body and to become dangerous. And only when these circumstances exist will the diseased part of the national complex dominate the healthy part. Anti-Semitism has a long tradition in Germany, but in periods of normality and prosperity it has remained quiescent, in a state of lethargy, awaiting its hour. And its hour came again with the post-war crisis.

National misery, speculation and demoralisation created by the war aroused the anti-Jewish feeling to a tremendous pitch. As Emile Zola once wrote, "Anti-Semitism, in those countries where it is really virulent, is the weapon of a political party or the result of a difficult economic situation."

After the war there were, as we shall see, twenty million hungry people in Germany, and the vast majority of this miserable army of paupers was "Aryan". In such circumstances a few words of Nazi propaganda against those Jews who were in a better economic situation, were enough to arouse the feeling of anti-Semitism latent in the German people to a state of fury. A large number of Jews held posts, of greater or lesser importance, in the Civil

Service; many of them were doctors, engineers, lawyers, business men with large clientèles and considerable incomes. On the other hand, there were innumerable "Aryan" engineers, lawyers, doctors and business men who were starving, and who naturally sympathised with the idea of expropriating the Jews. Hitler's anti-Semitic propaganda included phrases such as this: "The Jews are taking the bread from German mouths. The Jews are in control of the Berlin Press, the Theatre, Art. There are too many Jewish lawyers, too many Jewish teachers, too many Jewish doctors. The Jews are a pest, worse than the black vomit."

National-Socialism had to make use of this very effective weapon, not only in order to take over, for the benefit of the Nazis, the work and wealth of the "Non-Aryans"—in 1939 the fortune appropriated by the Nazis from the Jews in Germany and Austria amounted, according to official statements, to RM. 10,000 million (£500 million)—but also in order to distract the attention of the masses at times when the Party was in danger. Anti-Semitism was one of the smoke-screens behind which the Nazis hid their inability to resolve the social problem. By organising pogroms, by persecuting the Jews, by setting fire to synagogues, they deceived the credulous into believing that they were bringing about the promised revolution.

As soon as Hitler rose to power he established the *numerus clausus*, a measure by which work in all the liberal professions was reserved exclusively for "Aryans". And with the Jewish shops closed down, the "Aryan" shop-keepers gained the trade of their whole district.

As far as the "social" side was concerned, therefore, anti-Semitism was the only point in the National-Socialist programme which the Nazis proposed to fulfil and were to fulfil.

By these false promises, as by their methods, the Nazis showed themselves to be unquestionably demagogic.

Napoleon on St. Helena is reported to have said that the secret of victory consists in having been born in the time and country propitious for the development of one's personality. "In the period of Louis XIV", he added, "I should have been nothing more than a Marshal like Turenne, if that." In the Germany of Wilhelm II—that is to say, in the time of German Imperialist prosperity—Hitler would probably never have been any more than the corporal that he became in the Army—at the most an officer—or in private life a draughtsman, an architect's assistant. Hitler's psychopathology is that of a man incapable of succeeding in any normal medium, and for that same reason, capable of going very far in a confused, nihilist and hysterical society. His personal strength derives from a certain hypnotic power to which his intimate associates have often borne witness. He wields tremendous

personal influence over his acolytes—Röhm, Göring, Gregor Strasser, and the rest. But this hypnotism is powerless with normal human beings, and his speeches would have no effect on a satisfied people, a people free from rancour and with a sense of humour.

Hitler's political career is very definitely the result of certain circumstances—hence the fact that his attempts to conquer power have so many times been exposed to failure. He is a neurotic who appealed to a nation whose nerves were deranged by the war and the post-war chaos, a chaos which in Germany is not yet at an end. A large number of the Nazi leaders are abnormal, psychiatric cases, the dregs of German society. Hitler's personal influence, his hypnotism, is to them irresistible, but it would doubtless have few secrets for the psycho-analyst. In the moral plane National-Socialism is a social selection reversed. Hitler's entourage, the group of men who were his intimates during the first years of the National-Socialist movement, provides a better definition of the Party and its leader than the twenty-five Points of the National-Socialist programme. Rosenberg, the racial theorist, is a dreamer, obsessed with the idea of the superiority of the Nordic race. Röhm, Christian Weber and Julius Streicher were sexual maniacs; Emile Maurice, Hitler's chauffeur, a sadist; Hoffmann, the photographer, amoral. Himmler, a man incapable of the slightest emotion, is as cold and sinister as a blade of steel. Göring is a demoralised brute, like thousands of other German officers who had their careers cut short after the war. Josef Göbbels, who joined the movement later, is a cripple, filled with profound resentment against society and life. And in each town, city or village of Germany the local leaders of the Nazi movement are men of like condition.

Adolf Hitler lives and moves and has his being among these people, and the most perverse are his greatest intimates. The fact that he is surrounded by them, however, does not mean that he shares their vices. He ignores these vices—in fact, is blind to them. Good or bad, perverse or saintly, Hitler tolerates all who surrender themselves to him and who blindly obey him. Men for him are mere instruments; women without attraction. He is obsessed with the idea of a great Germany; it is his religion, and nothing else has any meaning. His one friend is the German people, the German race. He cares nothing for books, for clothes, for drinks, for tobacco. His favourite author is Machiavelli; his favourite composer Wagner, the Nordic mythologer.

Hitler does not enjoy life in the same way as others do. And this refusal of enjoyment, as Otto Strasser has said, is deliberate. Vices use up energy, and the "saviour" of Germany must conserve all his strength for his great mission.

And what is that mission? To emancipate the German race—and make it master of the world. But Hitler, who is the product of a specifically German situation, represents everything that was at that moment negative in the German people. It was the baser instincts of the nation, aroused and aggressive, which brought him to the fore—racialism, militarism, resentment, and the desire for revenge. The demoniacal spirit made ready to suppress all the social values which are opposed to national dissolution. Everything destructive in the Nazi programme was to be carried out; everything constructive to remain a dead letter.

Hitler and Göbbels and all the propagandists of National-Socialism worked on the feelings of masses ready to listen to their destructive doctrines. In the great cities of Germany there were half a million Army men with no profession and no future. And these were not the only desperate people. The war had wrought ravages in the German soul. The tremendous collective disillusionment which it had created had made sceptics or cynics of some—such as the Republican and traditionally Conservative politicians—and Nihilist fanatics of others, men of incurable resentment who do nothing but hate.

Hitler in these circumstances had all the personal qualities necessary for victory. His language is that of a man defeated in life addressed to a people defeated in history. Fate had at first treated him harshly. He wanted to be an architect, and had remained a bricklayer; he dreamed of being an artist, and had been forced to paint doors and windows for a living. For four years he was in the trenches and never rose higher than the rank of corporal. The diseased members of the German nation heard their own words echoed in the speech of Adolf Hitler, the Ausgestossener. The despairing multitude identified themselves with the humiliated orator. If they had not been in a state of hysteria, Hitler would have remained in obscurity, venting his hatred ignored and alone. But in the circumstances Hitler had no rival in the art of swaying the masses. His hour of triumph had arrived, and the miracle would have been not that he triumphed, but that he should have let his prey escape.

If Hitler is asked to speak on a constructive theme, he remains tongue-tied. If he is told to recount some episode, he hesitates, becomes confused. His strength lies in abstractions, the appeal to the passions, not to intelligence. For Hitler loathes intelligence.

Otto Strasser has written of him:

"I have been asked many times what is the secret of Hitler's extraordinary power as a speaker. I can only attribute it to his uncanny intuition, which infallibly diagnoses the ills from which

his audience is suffering. If he tries to bolster up his argument with theories or quotations from books he has only imperfectly understood, he scarcely rises above a very poor mediocrity."

Strasser himself believes that the only entirely original chapter of *Mein Kampf* is the one on Propaganda. The rest, he thinks, was taken by Hitler from the doctrinaire literature in vogue at the time, and corrected and amplified by Father Stampfle, who spent months in giving the famous book its present form.

Hitler is above all an actor. His psychological resources allow him to change from indignation to serenity, from tempest to calm, with amazing facility. Like all great actors, he makes use of auto-suggestion, and in his famous diplomatic encounters he is capable of bursting into tears by a mere effort of will. He is the perfect dissembler, rich in stratagems of the most varied nature, all designed to achieve his desire for domination. When his screams and hypnotic power fail him, he sheds a few tears. And when this is not enough to subdue his opponent, he calls in his gangsters.

A dangerous man, Hitler, in the neurotic Germany of the post-war period. For, besides being a magnificent actor, he is a master of the art of Propaganda, and his great political instinct and magnificent intuition have been of decisive assistance in his career. With these personal qualities he has a tremendous advantage over the other political leaders of Germany, not only because the nation is distressed, but because, of all the men who share in the government of the country, he is the only one who knows what he wants—the only one, too, who is ready to fight for victory at all costs. Hitler believes in something—a great Germany—and he believes fanatically and is quite sure of himself. The other politicians—business men, bourgeois mediocrities—are nothing but doubting shades.

Mussolini's *coup d'état* at the end of 1922 marked the end of the revolutionary atmosphere in Europe created by the war. Mussolini began the great offensive of European reaction against the proletarian threat, and the proletariat had to change their tactics if they were not to be defeated throughout the whole of Europe as they had been in Italy. Mussolini's *coup d'état* was followed by a military dictatorship in Spain, a reactionary Government in France, and the defeated *putsch* of Hitler and Ludendorff in Bavaria.

It is obvious that the rise to power of Italian Fascism encouraged National-Socialism to make its first attempt on the German Republic.

General von Epp, Chief of the Reichswehr in Bavaria, had

become suspect in the eyes of the Berlin Government, who were not ignorant of the movements of the ex-combatants, nor of the contacts existing between them and the Army leaders. The Nazi troops had held manœuvres in May 1923 at Oberwiesenfeld, a dress rehearsal for the *putsch* which took place in November. In September the Reich Government dismissed all the high officials in Bavaria, and sent von Kahr, a Monarchist and man of confidence, as State Commissioner. Von Epp was put on the retired list, and his place taken by General von Lossow, while Colonel von Seisser was made Chief of the Bavarian Police.

The Nazis used to meet every night in private rooms at the Burgerbrau, a Munich beer-hall, where they would conspire to their hearts' content. The chief conspirators were Hitler, Röhm, Göring, Gregor Strasser, Hess, Streicher. And General Ludendorff, who, as he lived outside Munich, did not always attend the meetings, was an enthusiastic supporter of their plans.

Hitler, believing that the hour had come, was impatient to unleash the counter-revolution, and fixed November 8th for the *coup d'état*. On that day nearly 1,000 National-Socialists were concentrated in Munich. Von Kahr, the Reich representative in Bavaria, was one of the speakers at a Monarchist meeting which was being held that night in the Burgerbrau. Hitler's idea was to win over the authorities, and at the appointed hour he marched into the beer-hall, followed by his Storm-Troopers. Other detachments surrounded the building. Interrupting von Kahr's speech with loud cries, Hitler stood up on a chair and, firing his revolver at the ceiling, exclaimed in a tone of exaltation: "The National revolution has begun!" He then immediately invited von Kahr, von Lossow and von Seisser to join him for conversations in a neighbouring room. The Nazi Chief took out his revolver, saying that he had four bullets, one for each of them, if the movement was a failure; would the authorities support the revolution? The situation of the State Commissioner, the Chief of the Reichswehr and the Chief of Police was unusual in the extreme. Von Kahr's Monarchist principles would not allow him to accept Hitler as leader of the State, a post which the Nazi agitator had reserved for himself, but finally an agreement was reached, Hitler ceding the coveted position to the overthrown dynasty.

The four men between them formed a Government; von Kahr was to be regent of Bavaria, Ludendorff leader of the National Army, von Lossow War Minister, and von Seisser Minister of the Reich Police.

At this point Ludendorff arrived, and pronounced himself at the disposal of the "National Government".

The conspirators passed a night of uncertainty, not knowing what to do—except von Kahr and his subordinates, who took immediate measures to suppress the *putsch*. The Storm Troopers, however, had begun to act. At midnight some 200 Hitlerites, with hand-grenades, rifles and pistols, assaulted the offices of the Socialist newspapers *Münchener Post* and *Bayerische Volksblatte*, breaking the windows, destroying the libraries and taking away the typewriters and all the money they could find.

On the next day, November 9th, Hitler proposed an outdoor demonstration. But Munich was already occupied by the Reichswehr and the police.

At the head of the demonstration marched Hitler and Ludendorff. The rebels had launched a manifesto: "The revolution which has lasted five years ends today!" They were greeted enthusiastically by the public in the Marienplatz, but on arriving at the Feldherrn-hall, Government troops opened fire, and most of the Nazis took to their heels. Ludendorff marched on, regardless of his safety, but Hitler jumped behind Ulrich Graf, a Nazi who was at his side, and hastily flung himself to the ground. In the meantime Röhm had taken possession of the former War Ministry, and was engaged in a desperate struggle with the Army troops, who finally recaptured the building after considerable losses on both sides.

As a result of these skirmishes, thirteen Nazis, whom Hitler names in his dedication of *Mein Kampf*, were killed, and many wounded.

Hitler escaped in a car, and hid himself in the house of the Nazi Press Chief, Hafstangel, where he was arrested. He was condemned to five years' imprisonment in the fortress of Landsberg, and during this time the Republic saw that he did not lack comforts. It was there that he dictated to Hess, a fellow-prisoner, the original text of *Mein Kampf*.

The *putsch* had failed. But the circumstances coinciding in the first National-Socialist attack on the new régime showed *urbi et orbi* that the Republic was nothing more than a façade. Pöhner, the Munich Chief of Police, was implicated in the plot; he had promised to support Hitler and was to have been made Prime Minister in the "National Government". The Reichswehr had its moment of hesitation; when Gregor Strasser withdrew his forces towards Landshut he took a part of the Storm Troopers with him, threatening to fire if they were not allowed free access. The Reichswehr thereupon retired from the scene.

CHAPTER TWENTY

THE MASSES' WILL TO LIVE

A GERMANY torn apart by anarchy meant a Europe without peace. If law and order were to be established in Europe, it was necessary to pacify Germany and to strengthen the weak Republic of Weimar. But it had already been seen that German disorder could not be remedied by fresh military interventions on the part of the Allies. Economically France lost more than she gained by the occupation of the Ruhr.

Germany was no longer paying reparations. In 1922 she had requested a moratorium—which Great Britain was ready to concede, though not France. There was at the time a notorious divergence of opinion between the two Allies, particularly on the question of reparations. The American Senate was opposing the policy of President Wilson, while the United States Government had regained their liberty of action and were establishing relations with Germany independent of the Versailles Treaty. But America could not abandon her interests in Europe, since she had lent large sums of money to the Allies during the war. In consequence, although far removed from the League of Nations, she continued to intervene in the matter of reparations. The world could not remain in such a state of chaos, and it was agreed, first, to place the reparations question on a more solid basis, and secondly to reinstate Germany in the realm of European politics, from which she had been banished as a punishment for war guilt. In short, the Reich began to receive better treatment.

The Allies—who by now were so only in name—drew up the Dawes Plan at the beginning of 1924, and in the summer of that year it was put into effect. The object of this Plan was to repair German finances, beginning with currency. As previously stated, a large international loan was made to the Reich, and on that basis Dr. Schacht, President of the Reichsbank, stabilised the mark by adopting the gold standard.

At the end of 1924 Germany began to return to normal. The French had retired from the Ruhr. Industry began to adapt itself to peace-time conditions. And after the cleaning-up of German finances, the International Banks once again conceded credits to the Reich. German industrialists obtained innumerable short-term loans, of which mention has been made earlier in this book.

The new policy of the Allies *vis-à-vis* Germany had important political consequences. German collaboration was sought in the political reconstruction of Europe, and the Versailles Treaty became a thing of the past. For when the United States cut them-

selves off from Europe, the guarantees which they, together with Great Britain, had given for the security of France disappeared. But France still went in fear of Germany, and she therefore set about concluding a series of alliances with the neighbours of the Reich. Considering them insufficient, however, the Paris Governments, who saw that Germany had taken the path of reconstruction, asked for fresh guarantees for her security. Finally the Locarno Pact was signed in 1925, by virtue of which Germany, France, Belgium, Italy and Great Britain collectively guaranteed the inviolability of the Belgo-German and Franco-German frontiers such as they had been defined in the Versailles Treaty.

Thus did Germany return to her place in European politics. In September 1926 she joined the League of Nations, and was given a permanent seat on the Council.

The intention of the Allies in 1919 had been to destroy the Reich as a great Power. In 1926 she was recognised politically on an equal footing with the "Versailles Powers". And although the new member of the League continued to be subject to annual reparations payments, and to the fulfilment of the military Articles of the Versailles Treaty, there can be no doubt that a revolution in international policy had taken place.

The effect of the change was immediately felt in Germany. The masses wanted to live, and as soon as they found work, internal conflicts lessened considerably. With the first Stresemann Government a new period opened for the Republic.

The Republic flourished and National-Socialism languished. As was to be expected, the Hitler movement entered a period of crisis. Up to the end of 1924 the German National-Socialist Workers' Party had been outlawed. It did not disappear on that account, however, for under Ludendorff's guidance it took another name and became the "Popular Liberty Party". In the General Elections of May 1924—a time of economic chaos—this Party gained 1,920,000 votes, and returned thirty-two deputies to the Reichstag. In the summer, however, the Dawes Plan was put into effect, and in December, when the moral and material improvement of Germany had already begun, the Hitler Party obtained only 840,000 votes, with a loss of twenty seats.

In 1925 Ebert, the first President of the Republic, died, and Germany looked round for a successor. Social-democracy nominated Otto Braun, the Catholic Centre Wilhelm Marx, and the Democratic Party Willi Hellpack. (These three Parties formed the famous Weimar Coalition.) The Right nominated Jarres, National-Socialism General Ludendorff, and the Communists Ernst Thälmann.

No one was successful in the first ballot, for no one gained an absolute majority—that is to say, no nominee received more votes than all the rest put together.

The Reichsblock, or political block of the Rights (Industrialists and Junkers), realised that they could not be victorious in the second ballot unless they could put forward a great national personality to impress the German people. Hindenburg, hero of Tannenberg, the most popular figure in Germany, was approached by the members of this block, and accepted their invitation. The old Marshal—he was then seventy-eight years old—who had been living in retirement in his Hanover residence, far removed from political activities, was elected without moving from his niche in the country. Standing head and shoulders above the mediocre personalities of the Republic, he inevitably wielded a strong influence on the spirit of the people. In reality, however, the majority of Germans voted against him, as he received 14,655,000 votes against the 15,682,766 of the Weimar coalition and the Communist candidate Thälmann. If the Communists had supported the Republican coalition, Hindenburg would have been defeated. He was successful because of this lack of co-operation among his adversaries, and because the Reichsblock, in nominating him, had deprived the struggle of all party character—for although a Junker and a member of the Right-wing, he was, in the eyes of the man-in-the-street, far above all party politics.

As has already been said, General Ludendorff was the National-Socialist candidate, and in the first ballot he obtained only 210,968 votes. This colossal failure gave evidence of two things: first that the masses were repudiating extremism, and second, that they saw in Ludendorff a party man. The Nazis continued to be unsuccessful, and in the second election Hitler advised his partisans to vote for Hindenburg. But it is obvious that no Nazi candidate would have gained more than the 840,000 votes which National-Socialism obtained in the elections of December 1924. Ludendorff never forgave Hitler for his mark of contempt, and this was the cause of his rupture with the future Führer.

The Hitler movement had become a mere sect. The leaders fought among themselves, and the masses looked on the Party as an anachronism. Nobody believed that the extreme Right of Nationalism had any future. The movement had become ridiculous, and the caricaturists of the Weimar Coalition, when they occasionally remembered Hitler, portrayed him as a comic figure. The only people who took the Nazis seriously were the Communists, who were involved in almost daily clashes with them. Wherever members of either Party met, they hurled insults at each other, and often came to blows.

During this period even the Reichswehr took away their support from Hitler, transferring it to the Stahlhelm (Steel Helmets —the *para*-military organisation of the Reichsblock), and the industrialists continued to have more confidence in this Conservative organisation than in the S.A. Up to 1930 the majority of the great industrial undertakings preferred to subsidise the Seldte troops. In 1927 a national concentration of the Stahlhelm took place in Berlin, and the industrialists of Westphalia and the Rhine offered RM.50 to each militiaman assisting at the manœuvres (for the meeting was little less). The capitalist with the most direct influence on these troops was Hugenberg, the magnate of industry and of the German Press.

The General Elections of May 1928 showed that National-Socialism was practically moribund. The process of disintegration of the Party had reached its highest point; Germany had pronounced against extremes. Since the December 1924 elections there had been fourteen Nazi deputies in the Reichstag, and in 1928 Hitler lost 120,000 more votes and two seats, leaving only twelve Nazi deputies, against 153 Socialists. The process of economic reconstruction, the abundance of employment, the entry of Germany into the League of Nations, and the relative internal calm were reflected in the voting, and strengthened the Weimar Coalition.

Not only the Nazis, but the Communists too, suffered a setback in the elections. In May 1924 they obtained sixty-two seats in the Reichstag, but in December 1924 they lost seventeen; in 1928 there was an improvement in their election figures, but they gained only nine seats, and therefore had eight less than before the stabilisation of the mark.

The Right-wing Parties no doubt hoped that Hindenburg would repay them for having elected him President, by interpreting the Constitution according to their own lights. To the astonishment, however, not only of the Right, but also of the Left, the old Marshal carried out the constitutional precepts with scrupulous care. The reactionaries, feeling that they had been cheated, withdrew their former support from the octagenarian, stating that "he had surrendered himself completely to the Republicans and the 'Marxists'." On the other hand, the Parties like Social-democracy, who had had misgivings concerning Hindenburg, now began to sympathise with the Prussian general and to defend him from the more or less veiled attacks of his enemies.

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And Adolf Hitler? What was he doing during this period of sudden German prosperity? When in December 1924 the Nazi agitator left the Landsberg fortress, he was a different man—more

cautious, more Machiavellian, and therefore more dangerous. He had promised himself, and he promised the others, not to repeat the crazy *putsch* of 1923. His meditations at Landsberg had led him to the conclusion that the fact of not being a German subject (he was born, in 1889, at Braunau, an Austrian village at the foot of the Bavarian Alps) exposed him to the risk of banishment from the Reich, and that if he was to take a further part in German politics with impunity, he must acquire German nationality. He finally managed to do this by the simple expedient of arranging for the Nazi Minister, Dietrich Klager, to nominate him Regierungsrat. Hitler was now a German; the danger of banishment had disappeared.

The most urgent anxiety of this pan-German fanatic now was that the Bavarian authorities should recognise the legality of National-Socialism. He therefore got into touch with the Bavarian Minister Gürtner, and subsequently had an interview with Herr Heinrich Held, the leader of the Bavarian Catholic People's Party and the Bavarian Prime Minister. The racial leader had left Landsberg less scrupulous than he entered it; in his conversation with Held, he hastened to retract his previous statements, and confessed that the Munich *putsch* had been a great mistake. And, on an even yet more confidential plane, he told his influential interlocutor that he condemned the atheism of Ludendorff. Hitler, in fact, made his peace with the Catholics, without whose aid little could have been done in Bavaria. Held appeared to be impressed by this conversation, and promised to effect a reconciliation with Cardinal Faulhaber. The Nazi Party was once more on a legal basis.

From that time Adolf Hitler made every effort to show the reactionaries that he, too, was a reactionary, that the capitalists had nothing to fear from National-Socialism. He became more than ever convinced of the truth of the dictum that the end justifies the means.

Soon the opportunity came to remove all Conservative doubts concerning the character of the Party. The Republic held a plebiscite on the question of the return of their property to the Hohenzollerns, the Left launching a campaign in opposition. National-Socialism voted for the recovery by the Kaiser of his enormous fortune, and the Conservative classes realised that the Nazis were not so black as they had been painted.

Dr. Schacht, Reichstag deputy and member of the Executive Committee of the Democratic Party, resolved the conflict with his Party over the question of the Hohenzollern property, by resigning all his political posts. He, too, voted in favour of the return of this property to its former owners.

As has already been said, National-Socialism was traversing a fateful period. In the Reichstag it was a minute group, and its economic situation was lamentable. The masses wanted to live, and the demagogic fury of National-Socialism, its violent language, and its lack of a definite programme, all alienated them from the movement. Hitler, although insuperable in the art of propaganda, needed money if he was to attract sympathy away from the Weimar coalition towards his own Party. Propaganda is expensive, and National-Socialism had scanty funds and many debts.

He therefore approached the industrialists, men who were living through a period of great prosperity, but who found the social policy of the Republic profoundly irritating—the upper middle classes and the Junkers, in fact, hated Weimar. He was not long in making contact with Thyssen, Schacht and Emil Kirdorf, the last of whom was associated with the iron industry and had been given the task of distributing the secret funds of the heavy industries. The Nazi chief went so far as to expound at a meeting of business directors the National-Socialist point of view concerning the industrial organisation of the future Germany. The capitalists breathed a sigh of relief.

Hitler won over the industrialists, but that part of the Nazi movement which had taken seriously the anti-capitalist programme of the Party began to lose confidence in the Führer. The Nazi campaign in favour of the Hohenzollerns had created deep disgust among the socially radical National-Socialists, a disgust which soon developed into open rebellion. Otto Strasser, who had entered the Party in 1925, and who was working in Berlin with his brother Gregor, led the Northern insurrection against Hitler. The Prussian Nazis rose up against those of Bavaria, and convened a Party Congress in Hanover, at which they even went so far as to approve a different programme from that of the twenty-five Points. The conflict within the movement between Otto Strasser and Hitler was not finally resolved until 1930, when Strasser left the Party and founded the Black Front.

Not only did Hitler enter into relations with the industrialists and with such an important personage as Schacht, but, thanks to the Nazi policy regarding the fortune of the Imperial family, he became *persona grata* in Monarchist circles. It was not long, in fact, before he had formed something of a friendship with Augustus Wilhelm of Prussia, the Grand-Duke of Bavaria, Prince Christian Schaumburg-Lippe, Prince Guido Henckel-Donesmark, and other members of the fallen dynasties.

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From 1925 to 1929 Germany was absorbed in reconstruction. The number of unemployed was little more than a million, and

social insurance, a most important feature of Republican legislation, was assisting the most necessitous. So that although Hitler was able to give a certain impetus to Nazi propaganda with the money which he was beginning to receive from heavy industry, National-Socialism was still an obvious failure.

The secret of the prosperity (albeit a false one) which Germany was enjoying lies in her rationalisation. This rationalisation, carried out with the short-term loans and the large international loan of the Dawes Plan, had a double objective: the placing of war industry on a peace basis, and the recovery of the time lost by Germany in technical matters during the war. "Without rationalisation", said Krupp von Bohlen, "it would not have been possible to have converted war-time industry into a peace-time one."

Germany had not been able to perfect her productive machinery during the war, and it was by now out of date. Besides adapting industry to peace-time conditions, therefore, the German capitalists also carried out a policy of serial production and economy of hand labour. Within four years Germany had risen in technical matters to the level of the United States.

The period between 1925 and 1929 has been called the *conjuncture* of German rationalisation. This *conjuncture* was the immediate cause of German prosperity. Nearly all the working population of Germany was employed at the time. Veritable cathedrals of industry were built; new factories sprang up, and old ones were reconstructed and modernised. The Reich introduced new machinery and new methods into her industries. Krupp, who during the war only manufactured armaments, now began to produce agricultural machinery, accounting machines, steel for merchantship construction—even sets of steel teeth. The Gutehoffnungs-Hütte, the most important firm of German steel producers, spent 20 million dollars in reforming its production machinery.

The result of this vast production, financed in principle by the Allies, and of an enormous potential danger to them, was soon evident. If we take the figure of 100 as the index of British, American and German production in 1924, we find that in 1928 the following progress had been made in the respective countries:

Germany	144·9
United States	116·8
Great Britain	105·5

World crisis was not far round the corner.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

THE CRISIS

WHILE THERE was rationalisation of industry in Germany, there was work. And while there was work, there were wages. And while there were wages, there was consumption of goods. And while there was consumption of goods, there was a relative well-being among the masses. And while there was this relative well-being, there was no Fascism. But in 1929 the capitalist world was shaken to its foundations by a crisis of such dimensions that, even in countries with the strongest Parliamentary tradition, emergency measures were passed. One of the causes of this international crisis was excessive industrial expansion, and in Germany the economic disaster was given a special name: the crisis of rationalisation.

In 1929 German industry was in advance of that of any other nation in the world. She was able to produce, at a fantastic speed, sufficient to supply a considerable part of the world markets. "But manufacture", said Krupp von Bohlen, "is one thing, and sales are another."

The internal market could not support all the large German enterprises. The Gutehoffnungs-Hütte employed 80,000 workmen, Krupp 100,000, the I.G. and Leuna Werke more than 100,000.

If there were no markets, where did Germany place her products? Let us quote Krupp again:

> "We need markets, but the markets of the world are closed to us. Great Britain has erected tariff walls. In France, Italy, Sweden, the Balkans, in fact everywhere, German trade is up against barriers which little by little are becoming insurmountable."

For four years the illusion of rationalisation had lasted; for four years the German capitalists had been producing greater quantities than anyone else, and creating the most modern industry in the world. But overnight, as it were, rationalisation became not only useless but catastrophic. Giant factories, veritable marvels of technique, were paralysed. In one year the number of workmen employed in the Gutehoffnungs-Hütte dropped from 80,000 to 36,000, while Krupp reduced his staff from 100,000 to 50,000. On the other hand, rationalisation had consisted in the elimination of hand labour, so that the Opel Werke, for instance, needed only 7,000 workers for a production which formerly employed 13,000. At the end of 1930 nearly half the German productive machinery was at a standstill.

The year 1930 opened in Germany with a mass dismissal of

industrial workers. In the first fortnight of January 400,000 were thrown out of work, while by the middle of 1930 unemployment figures had increased from a little more than a million to 6 millions. German exports, which in 1929 amounted to RM.13,000 million, had dropped in 1933 to RM.5,000 million.

The United States and Great Britain passed through the crisis only with great difficulty. Would the German Republic be able to do so at all?

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The 6 million unemployed had to be supported by the State and the Municipalities. The German unemployed workman was given assistance; his food consisted of bread, potatoes and vegetables, and once a week he could buy meat and possibly even some butter. The Unemployment Insurance in Germany was fairly effective during the first six months, but as the crisis continued the State began to abandon its responsibilities. In the end the unemployed were supported by municipal charity, and assistance was reduced to a minimum. There was no longer any meat or butter, the diet of the workless consisted of potatoes and green vegetables, a plate of which cost the equivalent of twopence—a special price for the out-of-works.

Besides the unemployed, there were also men and women who worked only three or four hours a day, many of whom had their wages cut.

In 1930 Germany became once more a country of beggars, as in the days of the inflation. If we reckon that each unemployed man had to support two others in family—a conservative estimate—we find that there were 18 million Germans plunged in misery and dependent on public charity. And besides these 18 millions must be considered another 20 millions who were living on lowered wages.

There were towns such as Falkenstein in Saxon Silesia, a paralysed textile centre, where 50 per cent. of the population were workless, while those who were working earned only three or four marks more than the amount of the dole. The average income for children and adults was 2*d.* a day, and their only food was bread and potatoes. And there were hundreds of towns and cities in Germany like Falkenstein. In Fehrenbach, for instance, formerly a prosperous glass-manufacturing town, 90 per cent. of the population was unemployed. The municipalities were left to deal with the situation as best they could, but their coffers were empty. With the factories closed down, and the inhabitants out of work, where were they to get their funds? There were, of course, many large fortunes in Germany, but the Republic respected private property.

Yes, there were large fortunes in Germany. What is more, rationalisation had been a godsend to some captains of industry. In 1930 Germany had 130 millionaires more than in 1925.

Taxes had been increasing since 1926, until they had become insupportable for the proletariat and the middle classes. The following table shows how these direct and indirect taxes had risen:

1926	. . . .	45·6	per 100
1927	. . . .	61·0	„ „
1928	. . . .	65·2	„ „
1929	. . . .	68·3	„ „
1930	. . . .	82·2	„ „

The crisis flung the Social-democrats out of the Government. The new Cabinet was presided over by the Centre politician Brüning, who put through various social measures only comparable in severity with the war Communism of the Russians.

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The crisis destroyed all possibility of a rebirth of the German middle classes. But a democratic Republic or a Parliamentary Monarchy cannot be upheld without a strong middle class. Inflation had destroyed the German middle class, and, as we shall see, this class could not be re-created during the brief interregnum of industrial prosperity. In order to appreciate the real social situation of the Reich in 1930 we must study the distribution of the national fortune before that year.

In 1928 there was a working population of 32½ million in Germany. Of these, 29 million earned less than RM.200 (£10) a month; 3½ million between RM.200 and 3,000 (£10 to £150), and 30,000 from 3,000 to 1,000,000 marks (£150 to £50,000).

Let us see how this compares with British figures. In 1928 there was a working population of 20½ million in Great Britain, of whom 75 per cent. (against 90 per cent. in Germany) earned less than £10 a month. The middle classes represented 25 per cent. of the active population, as against 10 per cent. in Germany; that is to say, the British middle class was proportionately two and a half times larger than the German.

The wages of the 29 million Germans earning less than RM.200 a month were distributed as follows:

16 million earned less than RM.100 (£5).
7 „ „ RM.100 to 125 (£5 to £6 10*s.*).
6 „ „ RM.125 to 200 (£6 10*s.* to £10).

Half the working population of Germany, therefore, was earning wages less than the official recognised subsistence level. The wages of 3½ millions (in round figures) earning between 200

and 3,000 marks a month (£10 to £150) were distributed as follows:

2½ millions earned between 200 and 500 marks a month (£10 to £25).
900,000 earned between 500 and 1,500 marks a month (£25 to £75).
100,000 earned between 1,500 and 3,000 marks a month (£75 to £150).

So much for the wages. Now let us consider the distribution of the national fortune among the total population of the Reich, active and inactive.

62½ million Germans (propertyless) owned 16,000 million marks.
1½ ,, ,, (middle classes) ,, 35,000 ,, ,,
80,000 ,, (large proprietors) ,, 35,000 ,, ,,

The fortune of the 80,000 large proprietors was divided up as follows:

78,000 (rich men) owned 25,000 million marks.
2,000 (millionaires) owned 6,000 million marks.
150 (multi-millionaires) owned 4,000 million marks.

That is to say, 80,000 propertied Germans owned twice as much as 62½ million propertyless Germans.

If we analyse the fortune of the millionaires we find that:

2,200 owned between 1 million and 5 millions.
107 ,, ,, 5 millions and 10 millions.
33 ,, ,, 10 millions and more.

These last thirty-three individuals owned 1 per cent. of the private fortune of Germany.

The number of multi-millionaires was, therefore, 140, and they owned between them RM.1,400 million (£70,000,000), that is to say, an average of RM.10 million each (£500,000).

On the other hand 96 per cent. of the German population were propertyless, as against approximately 70 per cent. in Great Britain.

Let us now consider the large fortunes and their owners. Thirty-five families owned land to a value of 1,370 million marks (the ex-Kaiser, 200 millions; the ex-Crown Prince, 28 millions; the Princes of Thurn and Taxis, 200 millions; the Grand-Duke of Saxony-Weimar, 60 millions, etc.).

In heavy industry, nineteen families owned a fortune of 810 million marks (Krupp, 200 millions; Petscheck, 150 millions; Thyssen, 50 millions; Waldhausen, 30 millions; Haniel, 50 millions; Otto Wolff, 50 millions; Ottmar Strauss, 50 millions).

In the manufacturing industry, eleven families owned 230 million marks (Von Opel, 120 millions; Siemens, 20 millions, etc.).

In the chemical industry, twelve families owned 210 million marks (Von Weinberg, 50 millions; Bayer, 20 millions; Merck, 20 millions, etc.).

In commerce, nine families owned 200 millions (Albert Löske, 40 millions; Wertheim, 30 millions; Friedländer-Fuhl, 25 millions; Tietz, 20 millions, etc.).

In banking circles, thirty-two families owned 800 millions (Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, 120 millions; Goldschmidt, 45 millions; Rothschild, 20 millions, etc.).

Among those who had become millionaires in a few years through speculation were Jacob Michael (100 million marks), Fritz Mannheimer (50 million marks), Andreae (20 million marks).

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Such was the situation in Germany when the crisis of 1929 swept across the world like a cyclone. Four years of prosperity had made of Social-democracy the strongest party in the Reichstag. In July 1928 the Socialist Hermann Müller formed a coalition Government, of which three Ministers were also Socialists. The world crisis found German Social-democracy in power, a fact which heightened the drama of the situation, and which National-Socialism did not fail to exploit with Schadenfreude. The Müller Government fell in March 1930. On that day the Weimar Coalition virtually disappeared, and with it the German Republic.

In the twenty-one months of Social-democratic government, the Dawes Plan was replaced by the Young Plan, which notably advanced Germany's interests in the question of reparations, and the Allied troops abandoned the left bank of the Rhine. The Government defended social insurance against the attack of the capitalists, and set aside further sums for unemployment payments. The Socialist Minister of Labour, Wissel, resolved a widespread labour dispute in favour of the workers. The Government decreased the Reichswehr budget by RM.38 million, and not only prevented the Socialists from lowering wages, but even achieved a wage increase of between 4 and 5 per cent.

It was an evil chance which brought about the crisis just when the Social-democrats were in power. The capitalist Press attributed the economic collapse to Social-democratic policy, while the wage increases and other Government measures infuriated the industrialists, according to whom the blame for everything rested with the Social-democratic "Beneficent-State". Dr. Röch-

lin, President of the Essen, Mulheim and Oberhausen Chambers of Commerce, said at the time: "We cannot compete with our neighbours if we have to support these financial burdens and taxes of a social character. Belgium, France and Luxemburg can produce a ton of steel 35 marks cheaper than we can, because in those countries firms pay much lower wages and taxes."

National-Socialism, which had been chained up for four years, now rushed out like a hungry beast eager for its prey. On September 14th, 1930 Reichstag elections were held, which faithfully reflected the national catastrophe. The number of Hitler deputies rose from twelve to 107; at one blow National-Socialism gained ninety-five seats. The Communists won twenty-three seats, returning seventy-seven deputies in all. The Democratic Party, one of the three forming the Weimar Coalition, practically disappeared, and, ashamed perhaps of its feeble strength, it changed its name and became the "State Party". Social-democracy lost ten seats. The returns of the Hugenburg's German Nationals dropped from 106 to forty-one.

National-Socialist returns in 1930 were symbolic. When there were only just over a million unemployed, the Nazis received less than a million votes; when there were 6 million unemployed, Hitler received 6 million votes.

National-Socialism had gone to the elections with abundant resources. Industry was impatient to abolish social insurances and to push Germany into war, and Hitler, who had formerly only been able to rely on Thyssen's funds, during the period of Social-democratic government, began to receive large sums from the whole of the heavy industries. The following episode throws light on the relations at the time between Hitler and the capitalists: In April 1930 a strike was declared in Saxony, in which the Nazi workers took part, supported by their Press. The Federation of Saxon Industrialists thereupon sent an ultimatum to the Führer saying, "Unless the strike order is condemned and opposed by the National-Socialist Party and its papers, notably the *Sächsischer Beobachter*, the entire Reich Federation of Industrialists will cease its payments to the Party," as a result of which Hitler ordered the members of the movement to return to work. This ultimatum of the industrialists caused widespread dissension among the Nazis, and enraged Otto Strasser and his partisans, who decided to continue supporting the strikes in spite of Hitler's orders.

Nazi propaganda could not fail to cause a profound effect among masses who had once more been plunged into despair. Versailles, the reparations, France, were the subjects most frequently handled by the Hitler agitators. "18·7 per cent. of the working population of Germany", said the Nazis, "is unemployed,

and only 1·5 of the French working classes. What is the cause of this? Reparations, which have enriched France as much as they have impoverished the Reich." So strong and effective was Fascist propaganda concerning the Versailles Treaty, that the German Communist Party at the last moment hastily added this plank to its own platform in order to prevent the masses from lining up behind the Nazis.

The Social-democrats were practically expelled from power by the crisis. "The German people", wrote the Nazi Press, "need a Government stronger than the crisis. The Socialists are not only incapable of remedying Germany's plight, but are even increasing it. In 21 months of 'Marxist' government the number of unemployed has risen from one million to six."

The people gave Hitler more votes than they gave the Communists for the same reason that they voted for Social-democracy in 1928. The masses wanted to live, and they suspected that Communism would drag the nation into a civil war like that of 1919. A social revolution would demand fresh sacrifices, fresh struggles, a long period of privations. On the other hand, National-Socialism asked for nothing. A large proportion of the masses undoubtedly believed that the destruction of the Versailles Treaty and the ending of reparations—the cause of the national misery, according to the Nazis—would bring about a return to prosperity. The German nation had experimented since the war with practically every kind of Government. It had had Councils of Workers and Soldiers, a Communist Government in Bavaria, middle-class Governments, Social-democratic Governments. After all, Hitler was new, and had not yet been a failure.

The September 1930 elections finally upset the constitutional balance of the German Republic. The middle parties had disappeared. Parliament could not function properly with 107 Nazis and seventy-seven Communists who never ceased to insult each other, and who even came to blows. Parliamentary sessions had, in fact, become pitched battles. Germany was entering the last phase of the civil war which began in 1919. The Germany of Weimar was dead; was she to be buried by Hitler or the Communist leader Thälmann?

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

THE END OF THE WEIMAR REPUBLIC

THE CATHOLIC Centre, ever since the days of the National Assembly, had been no less an arbiter of German policy than Social-democracy. In the space of fourteen years its politicians

had presided over ten Governments. (The Christian Trades Unions had a membership of over a million.) The social basis of the policies of the two Parties had made the collaboration of Catholics and Socialists possible. But the crisis broke up the Weimar coalition; we have already seen how one of its pillars, the Democratic Party, perished in the 1930 elections. The days of Parliamentary Cabinets were over. When, therefore, Hermann Müller, the Social-democratic Chancellor—gigantic and solemn as an elephant—made way for Heinrich Brüning, the best-ordered intelligence of the Catholic Centre, it was the beginning of the end of the Weimar Republic. Brüning could only govern semi-dictatorially, by having recourse to Article 48 of the Constitution, for the new Government had only a small Parliamentary majority. The Socialists supported Brüning, tolerated him, looked on him as a lesser evil. "We must save the Republic," they said.

For twenty-seven months the country's destinies were in the hands of the Catholic Centre. Social insurance suffered enormously during that period, while increased taxation made the situation of the proletariat and the middle classes more miserable than ever. The standard of living of the German worker was as bad as that of the Russian worker after the Civil War, with the important difference that the former was not building up Socialism, nor could he see before him a promising future, but rather the threat of fresh sacrifices and further struggles. Every Notverordnung (Decree of Necessity) dictated by the Government was a drain on the resources of the lower classes. The Social-democrats sometimes remained silent, sometimes protested, but in view of the Nazi peril they continued to support Brüning.

When the Catholic Chancellor had done all the harm he could to popular economy, he set about to scratch the surface of the privileges of the great landowners. For in the second phase of his Chancellorship, Brüning had conceived great reformist plans. He wanted to nationalise some of the land, after indemnifying the landowners, and to settle on it unemployed workmen. It would seem that he proposed to restore the Monarchy by a Hindenburg decree, to be approved by a majority in the Reichstag. Brüning's idea was to avoid civil war, and he undoubtedly thought that a constitutional monarchy would be a method of preventing national dissolution. But such a monarchy would have needed the support of a strong middle class, and this was a pillar which the industrious Chancellor could not build.

Neither the nationalisation of land nor the establishment of a constitutional monarchy was looked on with sympathy by the Junkers surrounding Hindenburg. On the contrary, no sooner

did they learn of the Chancellor's agrarian schemes than they began to accuse him of trying to introduce Bolshevism. The *camarilla* of the Presidency then hastened to get rid of a man who was acceptable while he reduced wages and increased the taxation of the working classes, but who was becoming dangerous as a reformer. Hindenburg dismissed Heinrich Brüning in May 1932.

No one, however, had worked with more enthusiasm than Brüning for the re-election of the old Marshal two months earlier. The Republicans still looked on the Prussian General who despised Hitler as perhaps the last guarantee for the salvation of the régime. On the other hand, the Parties who put Hindenburg forward as a candidate for the Presidency in 1925 had lost confidence in him, and in 1932 nominated Adolf Hitler.

For some months National-Socialism, Hugenberg's Nationalists and Steel Helmets, von Papen and Schacht, had been working to overthrow the Brüning Government, and they finally formed an alliance at Harzburg with the exclusive object of gaining power themselves. The first public act of the Harzburg Front consisted in putting forward Adolf Hitler in opposition to Hindenburg. The Social-democrats, of course, supported the latter. In the first ballot no candidate obtained an absolute majority, Hindenburg receiving 18 million votes, Hitler 11 million and Thälmann 5 million. In the second ballot, however, Hindenburg gained 53 per cent. of the votes, Hitler coming second with 13 million.

In spite of the attempts of the Presidential clique to stress the fact that Hindenburg was not a Party man, the election fight was far less obscure than in 1925. Slightly paradoxical, perhaps, but less obscure. There can be no doubt that Hindenburg was re-elected as the guardian of the Constitution; the majority of the people, in spite of the six million unemployed, still looked on Hitler as a menace, and the Prussian general as a stabilising factor.

Hindenburg was, however, nearing his eighty-fifth year, and the German situation called for a President in the full enjoyment of his faculties. Hindenburg, who was a Junker and a Prussian—everybody had been surprised by his fidelity to the Constitution for seven years—was the servant of the Presidential *camarilla;* Meissner, the Secretary of State, the Junker Oldenburg-Januschau and Hindenburg's family friends, all belonged, like him, to the old ruling classes.

The echo of the Centrist and Socialist speeches supporting Hindenburg in the Presidential campaign had scarcely died away when the President of the Reich authorised the first *coup d'état;* Brüning was replaced by von Papen, although the latter could not

rely on more votes in the Reichstag than Hugenberg's Party, and had no other source of power than the Presidential one.

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The career of Franz von Papen, up to the time of his becoming Chancellor, had been a chequered one. An unscrupulous Prussian, he was continuously engaged in conspiracy and intrigue. These activities were, in fact, his spiritual pastime. But in contradistinction to great conspirators such as Fouché, for instance, this ex-Captain of Hussars relieved himself of conspiratorial anxiety by intriguing solely for others. His complicated manœuvres only diverted him when he was acting as a third party in the plot. During the last war he was a spy in the United States, but a spy with extra-territorial rights and a diplomatic passport. Von Papen never risked anything. Owner of the Catholic newspaper *Germania*, married to a wealthy woman from one of the industrial upper middle-class families, a member of the Prussian aristocracy, and the star of the Herrenclub, this servile Catholic was called upon to play a particularly turbid rôle in the German politics of the last days of the Republic. It might have been difficult for the Herrenclub, the great landowners, or the Presidential *camarilla*, to have found a suitable substitute for Brüning. But von Papen is always ready for any enterprise. The unpleasant jobs that no one else wants he will tackle with pleasure if they involve a certain "emotion". He is a melodramatic actor, but an actor who plays his part with caution—although, judging from the number of important documents he has lost, he appears to be a trifle careless.

To replace Brüning was to embark on the most exciting adventure which life could offer to a man of von Papen's moral fibre. The latter rose to power with the mission of throwing Social-democracy out of the Prussian Government. It was a dangerous task, and of all the German politicians, outside Nazism, few would have dared to carry it out. But nothing held any difficulties for the adventurous and intriguing von Papen, once the necessary precautions had been taken. The new Chancellor first made sure that he could rely on the Reichswehr, and placed its Chief, Kurt von Schleicher, in the Ministry of War. Two adventurers volunteered to deal the blow to Social-democracy. And fortune, which usually favours the bold, smiled on their undertaking.

Germany was a Federal Republic, and the Prussian Government had jurisdiction over three-quarters of the Reich. Ever since the days of Weimar, the Social-democrats, Catholics and Democrats had had a majority in the Prussian Landtag. The Prussian Government, formed of representatives of these three

Parties, and presided over by the Social-democrat, Otto Braun, had been in a very difficult situation, however, since the 24th of April, 1932, when the elections for the new Prussian Diet had taken place. The composition of the new Chamber made the formation of a Government impossible, for the distribution of political strength was such that there could be no question of a coalition, and, on the other hand, no one Party was strong enough to form a Government on its own. Elections had been announced for the Reichstag in 1932, and the Prussian Parliament agreed that the same Government should carry on until such time as the new National Parliament should be able to function.

It was quite obvious that von Papen could not direct the general policy of the nation without arousing the opposition of the autonomous Cabinet of Prussia. The "Government of the Barons"—as the new Ministry was soon called—was incompatible with the "Marxist" Government of Prussia—the name given by the reactionaries to the coalition presided over by Otto Braun.

Brüning had refused to dismiss the Braun Cabinet when the enemies of the Republic asked him to do so, and this was one of the reasons why the Catholic Chancellor had to cede the post to von Papen.

On July 20th, 1932, Papen, with Hindenburg's approval, published a decree appointing himself Commissar of the Reich in Prussia, and nominating Dr. Brach, Mayor of Essen, as his deputy. By the same decree the Government of Prussia was ordered to cease its activities. In the post-war history of the whole world there are few dates of greater importance than this one. It may perhaps be said that on that day German Social-democracy and the Free Social Trades Unions held the destinies of the world in their hands. Prussia, "the Socialist fortress", was the last stronghold of the German Republic. If Social-democracy were to resist no one could prevent civil war. And civil war in the Reich would be violent and fierce; it would exhaust Germany for many years. World peace would be assured for an indefinite period.

The military strength of the Republicans in the event of hostilities was as follows:

Schutzpolizei (State Police)	100,000 men
Reichsbanner (Republican militia) . .	1,500,000 ,,
Communist Red Front (Communist militia) .	50,000 ,,
	1,650,000 men

The strength on which von Papen could rely was as follows:

Reichswehr	100,000 men
Stahlhelm	1,000,000 ,,
S.A. and S.S. (Hitler Troops) . . .	200,000 ,,
	1,300,000 men

From a military point of view, the Rights had the advantage, seeing that the Reichswehr was better prepared for war than the other *para*-military organisations. The anti-Fascists could compensate their disadvantage, however, with the formidable weapon of a general strike, which alone and unaided had defeated von Kapp's *coup d'état* and had put Colonel Erhardt's brigade and General Luttwitz' regiment to flight in 1920. That general strike of 1920 had been the immediate cause of terrible combats in the Ruhr,

Germany on July 20th, 1932 was an immense powder-magazine. The slightest spark might cause an explosion. In the streets, in the barracks, in political circles, in the working-class districts, the atmosphere was one of civil war. The Premier of the Prussian Government, as has been said, was a Social-democrat. The Ministry of the Interior was in the hands of another Social-democrat, Karl Severing. The Chief of Police—Grzinsky—was another. Of thirty Presidents in the Prussian Police, nineteen were members of the Social-democrat Party. The Schutzpolizei had been reorganised by Severing, and was relatively well-armed. It was a force which obeyed its chiefs blindly—of that there was never any question—and which was controlled by men of trust in the Ministry of the Interior.

When von Papen's decree expelling Social-democracy from its last stronghold was made known in Germany, the nation rose to its feet. Had the time come to fight? The workers rushed out in search of news. On the afternoon of the 20th the main streets of Berlin were crowded; the proletariat were awaiting orders, and Republicans and Marxists in excited groups were commenting on the day's events. In the Alexanderplatz Severing's mounted police broke up the crowd in front of the red-brick building of the Polizei-Präsidium. In the Unter den Linden the police also charged some of the groups, who dispersed with angry cries, only to re-form again. Von Kapp's frustrated *coup d'état* was recalled. Von Schleicher had the Reichswehr ready to support Papen. 6 million members of the Free Trades Unions, 100,000 Trades Union members under the influence of the Communist Party, and 1,200,000 members of the Christian Trades Unions, all supposed that there would be a general strike. The 7 million Social-democratic voters, the 5 million Communist voters, the 4 million Catholic

voters—all these 16 million anti-Fascists knew that as soon as the last line of Republican defence gave way terror would break loose. The hour was a decisive one. But the evening shades began to fall, and the Social-democratic leaders still hesitated. A Communist leaflet was passed round inciting the workers to a general strike, but the Communists, whose standing was not very high among the proletariat, were not strong enough by themselves to sway the masses. The Social-democratic workers would only obey the orders of the Social-democratic leaders. But what were the Socialist leaders doing in that hour, an hour of supreme importance not only for Socialism, but for the German Republic and the world? In the Inselstrasse, outside the General Headquarters of the Free Trades Unions, and in the Lindenstrasse, by the *Vorwärts* Offices, they were exhorting the masses to "keep calm".

The day had been hot and tiring. Towards sunset the people, confused and bewildered, went back to their homes, and Berlin was virtually occupied by the police. Schleicher reassured the Reichswehr chiefs: "Nothing will happen", he said.

The "Red fortress" of Russia had yielded. An officer and a handful of soldiers dragged the Social-democratic Ministers from their offices and accompanied them to the main door. Severing had sworn that only under compulsion would he leave the Prussian Government, and under compulsion he left it. The Social-democratic Ministers believed that they had done their duty, but German anti-Fascism had lost its Waterloo.

The news of the Social-democratic surrender spread over the whole of Germany during the night of the 20th, and dismay increased among the proletariat and the Republican middle classes. Otto Braun and Karl Severing could not submit to events, however; no sooner had they left the Prussian Government than they presented a firm protest to the Constitutional Tribunal of Leipzig.

The leaders of Social-democracy and of the Free Trades Unions had called a hurried meeting on that same 20th of July, and had agreed that *Vorwärts* should publish the following rallying-cry: "Everyone to the polls on the 31st! Thus will the politically-conscious working class of Germany put an end to the régime of the Barons."

On July 21st the masses read the *Vorwärts* and protested against the conduct of the workers' leaders. The German proletariat was by now an army with a broken morale.

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The events of July 20th had thrown public opinion into some confusion, and the humiliating capitulation of Social-democracy in Prussia increased the uncertainty. While the Government of

the Weimar coalition lasted, with jurisdiction over two-thirds of the nation, it was like a dyke controlling the turbulent waters of disorder and despair. But as soon as it disappeared, the demagogic torrent swept over the country, reducing it to the chaotic state of 1923.

The General Elections of July 31st, 1932 reflected the disappointment of the masses. The victory of National-Socialism and Communism exceeded all forecasts: Hitler obtained 13,700,000 votes, and 230 of his deputies were returned to the Reichstag as against eighty-nine Communists. The middle-class Parties disappeared altogether, and Social-democracy went back to its position of 1924.

Hitler's Storm Troops were maddened by victory, and a wave of Nazi terror swept over the whole Reich. In Eastern Prussia, in Silesia, in innumerable German cities, the Nazis began a bloody persecution of their political enemies. In Potempa five Storm Troopers dragged the Communist worker Pietrzuch from his bed, and beat him to death before his mother's horrified gaze. The Nazi soldiery sowed anarchy on all sides, while Hitler publicly approved all their crimes. Von Papen declared a state of war, and von Schleicher threatened to launch the Reichswehr against the S.A. The Republic, the State, the most elementary social laws, were in peril. Von Papen issued a pronouncement against Hitler, and stated that he would maintain the rule of law.

National-Socialism made haste to gain power. Above all it made haste to destroy the opposition . . . but in agreement with the Government. Hitler concentrated the S.A. near Berlin, and promised to support the Papen Cabinet if the latter would give the Storm Troops a free hand for three days. Before assuming power, Adolf Hitler wanted to terrorise his enemies. The Government, however, did not agree to this benevolent suggestion of the Führer, a sadist as thirsty for blood as any Moctezuma deity.

During the afternoon of the 13th of August, Adolf Hitler, Frick and Röhm called on Hindenburg to ask him to appoint Hitler as Chancellor. But the old Field Marshal soon sent them about their business; he had made Papen Premier because Hitler had promised his support, and now the Bohemian ex-corporal—as Hindenburg called him—had refused to keep his word. The most that Hindenburg was ready to promise Hitler was the Vice-Chancellorship. The Prussian octogenarian was highly indignant at the crimes committed by the Nazis, and reminded his three visitors that the Government would severely reprimand this type of delinquency.

Von Papen remained in his post of Chancellor, while Hitler looked for fresh support in his conspiracy against Hindenburg and

Papen, and in his attempt to take possession of the State by peaceful means. For National-Socialism feared a civil war. Hitler had changed considerably since 1923; he was by now the personification of caution and cunning, and was convinced that if the fight should once begin in the streets he would never attain power. A civil war in Germany would destroy all possibility of making war on Europe, of avenging the *Diktat* of Versailles, of giving vent to the fierce hatred which had been pent up within Germany ever since her humiliation.

The national chaos was reflected in the new Reichstag, which became a veritable Bedlam. Göring was elected President of the Chamber with Catholic Centre votes. The Communists demanded the derogation of all Government measures which had not been submitted for the approval of the Reichstag, and Hitler, who wanted to overthrow Papen, ordered the Nazi group to vote for this demand. Only Hugenberg's deputies voted in favour of the Government, which was defeated by 512 votes to forty-two, but the vanquished Chancellor replied by dissolving the Reichstag. Fresh elections were arranged for November 6th. Events were moving quickly.

National disorder increased. The transport workers in Berlin declared a strike, supported by the Nazi Trades Unions. It had become urgently necessary for Hitler to weaken the Government, to destroy the prestige of the Republic, to dissolve the State. Hindenburg would then have to turn to him, if other men and Parties became exhausted and impotent to maintain order. Was not National-Socialism by now the strongest political movement in Germany?

Nevertheless, Papen won the day. In the elections of November 6th Hitler obtained 11,705,256 votes, against 13,732,779 in the previous July. This falling-off was significant. The returns of Hugenburg's German nationals and of the Communists had increased; had hundreds of thousands of Germans, who in July voted for the Nazis, now voted for the Communists? The disillusionment of the masses was responsible for a drop of one and a half million in the total voting. This electoral result was a hard blow for National-Socialism. If Hindenburg and Papen had persisted in their policy of refusing Hitler access to power—that is to say, of refusing him the Chancellorship—National-Socialism would have had to fight in the streets (and this Hitler was determined to avoid at all costs) or to have resigned itself to an increasing loss of public support, with a consequent lessening of the chances of gaining power. But the Party which profited by the Nazi losses was undoubtedly the Communist Party, and this Communist advance certainly brought about a

reconciliation of the forces of the Harzburg front, that is, the forces of von Papen, Hugenberg, Schacht and Hitler. The Führer reacted in an hysterical fashion to the defeat of November 6th, but he was convinced that sooner or later the gates of the fortress would open to him without his having recourse to violence. This confidence in the future made him ignore the advice of the Nazi leaders, who counselled a *coup d'état* in the streets. And the development of events was to show that Hitler was right.

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On December 2nd, 1932, one of the strangest political events of history took place: the Chief of the Reichswehr, General Kurt von Schleicher, replaced Franz von Papen in the Chancellery. The incident in itself was surprising enough, for in militarist Germany the Army had never ruled directly and in the light of day. Many theories have been put forward concerning this extraordinary event, but in my opinion the mystery is not so deep as it would appear to be. Schleicher was given power by the same men who had given it to von Papen, although not for the same reasons.

Kurt von Schleicher was, like Papen, a master of intrigue. Unlike Papen, however, he had an excess of confidence in his abilities and a complete lack of political sense. Von Papen was a diplomatic intriguer; Schleicher a soldier who at the age of fifty had become Chief of the Reichswehr without ever having directed military operations, or, in fact, having moved out of his study. All his battles had been office ones. There was, however, more likelihood of his losing himself in the political maze of 1932 Germany than the astute proprietor of *Germania*.

The fall of von Papen was undoubtedly due to the fact that he could not rule for a day longer with the whole of the nation against him. In that welter of ambitions and violence, Papen was exhausted after six months in the Chancellery. It is true that the Nazis had lost votes, but the Conservative classes were disturbed at the progress of the Communists. Institutions were imperilled; the Presidential *camarilla*, which could make and unmake Governments, now convinced Hindenburg that a strong hand was needed on the reins. Schleicher, as leader of the Army, was at the time the most powerful man in the whole of Germany; besides this he was, and had always been, filled with an overwhelming personal ambition. His intimate friendship with Oskar von Hindenburg and other individuals surrounding the old Marshal was of definite assistance in replacing von Papen, who, incidentally, could never have become Chancellor if Schleicher had not previously given him the support of the Reichswehr. I am inclined to believe that the assistance of the Army in Schleicher's rise to power was not

very great. Everything was probably decided between Schleicher himself and the Presidential clique. The Reichswehr's subsequent indifference to its leader's disgrace confirms me in this suspicion.

General Schleicher took over the government of the country with a programme for German salvation. In the political sphere his plan was to destroy Hitler, and in the social sphere his ideas were radical. In order to weaken the Führer, he got into touch with the Left wing of National-Socialism, offering Gregor Strasser the Vice-Chancellorship, and inviting the leader of the Free Trades Unions, Theodor Leipart, to enter the Government which he proposed to form, a Government which was to have a wide social basis.

From the very beginning Schleicher behaved like a soldier who has ideas on the art of government—every soldier has "ideas" on this question—but who is ignorant of the effect of his actions.

As a beginning the new Chancellor addressed the nation by radio. Germany was all eager expectation. In Schleicher's opinion—as in that of every general in the world—the time for worrying over Socialist or Capitalist theories had gone by. It was—he said—urgently necessary to give work to the 6 million unemployed. He criticised von Papen's agricultural policy, and called himself a "Social general". As is hardly surprising, the Reichswehr Chief bewildered the whole nation.

He had not yet, however, made known all the schemes of his Government, which included the settlement of unemployed workers on uncultivated farms, and the abolition of industrial subsidies.

The Socialists were divided. Some of them wanted to support Schleicher; others said they would refuse to vote for him if he went to the Reichstag. Generally speaking, Social-democracy was against the new Chancellor, while the Trades Unions showed themselves ready to collaborate with him.

When the great industrialists and the Junkers learnt the plans of the "Social general", they began without loss of time to manœuvre for his downfall. The Presidential *camarilla* damped Hindenburg's enthusiasm for the Chancellor by telling him that Schleicher's national reputation was suffering considerably as a result of his many love affairs. The Harzburg Front did not take long to re-form in face of the threat represented by Schleicher's bold ideas, and in order that Hitler should take an active part in the conspiracy, von Papen promised to help him solve the financial problem of National-Socialism, whose debts at the time amounted to RM.12 million.

At the beginning of January 1933, therefore, in the Cologne house of the banking magnate Schroeder, there took place the

famous interview, arranged by Joachim von Ribbentropp, between Schröder, Hitler and Papen, as a result of which Nazi finances were put on a sound footing.

The offensive against the Schleicher Cabinet was already proceeding. Hitler, Schacht, Papen, Hugenberg and the Presidential clique were in agreement concerning the necessity for a new Chancellor.

Schleicher knew that conspiracies against him were on foot in the *salons*, but he believed that he was stronger than his enemies. He also knew of the reconciliation of Papen and Hitler in Schröder's house. In order, therefore, to blacken von Papen's reputation, he delved into the latter's political past, and brought to the light of day the Ost-Hilfe affair, which concerned financial assistance to the landowners on the eastern bank of the Elbe. Papen, of course, had given away millions to the Junkers on the pretext of remedying the agricultural crisis, and it was known that Oldenburg-Januschau, an intimate friend of Hindenburg, had received RM.456,000 with which he had been able to restore his three large properties and to buy a fourth.

The "Social general" wanted to destroy von Papen politically, but in attacking the latter he brought up his heavy artillery against the Presidency, for Oskar von Hindenburg, and the President himself, had benefited from Papen's generous distribution of funds.

In January 1933 a Committee of Landowners waited on Hindenburg and denounced Schleicher's ruinous agricultural policy. They complained that "not even the Marxist Governments had treated them worse than the Schleicher Cabinet". When the Chancellor learnt of the Junker protest, however, he approached Hindenburg in great indignation and tried to remove the impression created by the landed proprietors.

The situation was becoming daily more untenable for the Reichswehr Chief. But Schleicher was not a man to change his policy; making ready to defend himself, he drew up emergency measures. Confronting Oskar von Hindenburg, he demanded that the conspiracy against him should cease, under threat of publishing information concerning certain matters which the President's son had good reason for keeping to himself. The only result of this interview, however, was to heighten the *camarilla's* offensive against the Chancellor.

It could be said of Schleicher what Frederick the Great said of Joseph II of Austria, that he "invariably took the second step before he had taken the first". The Chancellor's plan, when he saw himself hemmed in on all sides, was to dissolve the Reichstag before the date fixed constitutionally for its reopening. But a

decree of dissolution would have to be signed by Hindenburg, and before obtaining this signature Schleicher had already incurred the hatred of the Reich President and his family.

Kurt von Schleicher became fully aware in the end of the forces arrayed against him. He saw himself in the centre of a ring of iron which was closing in on him little by little, and which would finally reduce him, the most powerful man in Germany, to a helpless puppet. Not once, however, did he think of yielding. His tactlessness, and his inability to fight in the political field against the members of the Harzburg Front, did not prevent him from realising that not only his professional and political career, but his very life, were at stake. The enemy opposing the Reichswehr Chief was implacable.

The desperate Chancellor had not, however, lost his last hope of salvation. After all, Papen, Hitler, Hugenberg, the Junkers, Schacht and other "anti-Marxist" organisations did not represent the whole of Germany. Other forces, comprising nearly 20 million adult Germans, feared, like the "Social general" himself, a victory of the reactionaries. The tortured Schleicher seriously considered once again a People's Government, based on powerful Workers' Trades Unions. But when he entered into negotiations for the first time with Gregor Strasser and Theodor Leipart, he had been sure of himself, with the power in his hands. Now this power was escaping him, and he was on the defensive.

Schleicher approached Social-democracy, not in order to invite this gigantic Party to help him to form a Cabinet, nor to ask advice on a Government programme, but to find out if the Socialists would be ready—it was still not too late—to do what they did not do when Schleicher himself had placed a lieutenant and a few soldiers at von Papen's disposal for the purpose of banishing Severing from Prussia. The general could no longer see any means of self-preservation but the fomenting of a civil war. And there can be no doubt that such a war, although cruel and terrible, would have been the only method of saving not only the Chancellor, but—what is far more important—the future of Germany and of Europe.

The Chancellor's plan was that of a retreating general who proposes to carry out a "scorched-earth" policy in order to hold up the enemy. With this idea in mind he asked Breitscheid, the leader of the Social-democratic Parliamentary group, if the Socialists "would go to the barricades" in the event of the Reichstag being dissolved and no general elections being held within the period indicated by the Constitution. Breitscheid, however, did not want to compromise either himself or his Party. Cautious and distrustful, frightened—like all Social-democratic

leaders—at the prospect of a struggle, he replied that "such a challenge would certainly produce the gravest storms". Schleicher, who was spoiling for the fight, for the conflict which he felt must on no account be avoided, listened to Breitscheid's reply with pleasure. But he probably did not realise that his interlocutor had given a general and vague reply to a concrete question. Would the Socialists go to the barricades? the Chancellor had asked. To this query Breitscheid did not reply.

We now know that on July 20th, 1932, when Social-democracy capitulated in Prussia, everything was not lost. Destiny wanted to test the German Social-democrats, and at the last moment she offered them a fresh opportunity—a chance of saving not only their honour, but other assets more important still. For there is no precedent in the whole of German history for a general, a leader of the Reichswehr and the Chancellor of the Reich, approaching the Socialists and proposing subversive action when everything seemed lost; and such an action should have been looked upon as a gift from Heaven. Even allowing for the fact that some of Schleicher's forces might fail him, he still had sufficient strength seriously to imperil a National-Socialist victory, and to free Germany from the Hitler terror, and Europe from war.

Time went on, and the 31st of January drew near, when the Reichstag (without a favourable majority for Schleicher) was to reassemble—or to be dissolved if the Chancellor could obtain Hindenburg's authorisation.

Certain that the President of the Reich would withdraw his confidence at the decisive moment, Schleicher once more entered into negotiations with the men he hoped would save him. Gregor Strasser, the leader of the Nazi Left, remained in the Party, but had already broken with Hitler. His strength would be a secret until the outbreak of hostilities. But the strength of Leipart, the leader of the Free Trades Unions, was immense. The Chancellor therefore conferred with him, and both together carefully examined the general situation. Schleicher's plan was that the Trades Unions should support the Reichswehr *coup d'état* by a general strike. Leipart, however, became frightened; Schleicher's suggestion was entirely unconstitutional. "What does Bumke think of this?" asked the workers' leader. (Herr Bumke was the President of the Constitutional Tribunal of Leipzig.) Social-democracy had learnt nothing since July 20th, neither had the Hitler terror which broke out after the National-Socialist victory of July 31st taught the Socialists a lesson. The one preoccupation of these men, in whose hands lay the destinies of Europe, was to act scrupulously within the law which Hitler was flouting.

Leipart and his friends would, however, have rejected Schleicher's bold suggestions even if Herr Bumke had been concerned in the plot, and their refusal to assist Schleicher's plans virtually placed Adolf Hitler in the Chancellery.

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Kurt von Schleicher, Chancellor of the Reich and leader of the Reichswehr, was defeated. All his plans had failed. He was at enmity with the industrialists and the landowners, but up to the last he did not lose hope of gaining the support of the Trades Unions and the masses. The iron ring was closing in on him, however, and he would soon be imprisoned within it, at the mercy of his enemies. Power had slipped from the grasp of this ambitious soldier, and he was facing alone the hostility of the Conservative classes and the cold indifference of the masses. There was nothing to do but go. Within a few days he was to lose his power and be no more than a retired general. And within a few months he was to lose his life at the hands of Hitler's hordes. Schleicher's mistakes had been fatal: he neither understood the Junkers nor the Social-democrats. His career as a guardian of order, as the strong arm of the Law, had ended ignominiously. Theodor Leipart, the revolutionary, reminded him that there were still High Tribunals in Germany, and that Herr Bumke was the Mahomet of the Social-democrats. Marxism, "that fearful enemy of society and destroyer of family life", rose up in righteous indignation at the incredible anti-juridical dishonesty of this Chancellor, who, in a moment of mental aberration, was preparing to behave like a vulgar agent of social disruption. It only needed the presence of a twentieth-century Aristophanes at the interview between Leipart and Schleicher for their conversation to have acquired the nature of immortality.

In the meantime, Adolf Hitler, filled with intolerant contempt for the nation's High Tribunals, was cold-bloodedly preparing his revenge. He was already certain that he had no enemies of any importance in Germany. Impatient to get rid of Schleicher, of whose manœuvres they were well aware, the members of the *camarilla* convinced Hindenburg that Hitler would no longer be dangerous as a Vice-Chancellor. The President of the Reich again offered the Chancellorship to von Papen and the Vice-Chancellorship to Hitler.

Hitler, however, would accept nothing less than the Premiership. He knew that he was on firm ground, and he refused to compromise. Papen would have no real objections to acceding to Hitler's wishes. The situation had changed very much since the month of May, when Papen had replaced Brüning; now the peril was greater, and as a consequence the Prussian intriguer, who

never ran any risks, elected to remain in a secondary position. He no doubt felt that it would be preferable for National-Socialism to deal with the chaotic situation. Hugenberg and his Steel Helmets, however, were hesitating before the abyss which had opened at their feet. On January 29th, 1932 they entered into negotiations with the National-Socialist leader, negotiations which lasted until the morning of the 30th. Hitler insisted on heading the future Cabinet, while his rivals in the Harzburg Front maintained that Papen should be Chancellor. This, too, was the condition put forward by Hindenburg, that is to say, by the Presidential *camarilla*, for the admittance of the Nazis into the Government. Papen remained silent. The negotiations seemed interminable, and Hitler was unyielding. Equally unyielding were Hugenberg, Seldte, Düsterberg, Oskar von Hindenburg and Meissner.

A clever manœuvre, attributed to von Papen, put an end to the conflict of opinions. News reached the ears of the negotiators that Schleicher was mobilising the Reichswehr; the Potsdam garrison was preparing to march on Berlin. Schleicher's *coup d'état* was imminent, and those disputing the Chancellorship became alarmed. Werner von Alvensleben—a member of the Herrenclub—declared that Papen and Hitler would be arrested on a charge of high treason, and that it was urgently necessary to arrive at some decision. Hours and hours of negotiations had not been able to wear down the resistance of Hindenburg and his friends, who were still definitely opposed to Hitler's accession to the Chancellorship. But the terrible—though imaginary—menace of the Reichswehr was enough to bring about agreement within a few minutes. It was arranged that Adolf Hitler should become Chancellor of the Reich, and National-Socialism had reached its goal. Those who made a fetish of the Constitution had good cause for alarm.

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

THE WEAKNESS OF THE GIANTS

On January 30th, 1933, national tension was as great as it had been on July 20th, 1932, the day when Papen flung the Socialist Ministers out of Prussia. Hitler was already Chancellor, but he had sworn to respect the Constitution, a detail which to many people was unimportant, but which nevertheless was of considerable interest in the eyes of the Centrists and the Social-democrats. Trades Unions with Socialist tendencies—those of Herr Leipart—issued a manifesto advising the proletariat not to take isolated action, a warning which seemed to imply that the

Trades Union leaders had not given up the idea of joint action. The Communists were marching through the working-class districts shouting "Down with Hitler!" The Dresden *Volkszeitung* called for a general strike, but no one took any notice. Working-class and Social-democrat leaders, the Reichsbanner, the Communist Red Front, the Catholic Republicans, all were waiting and hoping.

On the night of January 30th, 15,000 Hitlerites, carried away with enthusiasm, paraded with torches through the Wilhelmstrasse, before Adolf Hitler and Hindenburg.

The Opposition finally surrendered, without a sign of resistance, to National-Socialism.

There can be no question that the greatest share of responsibility for this surrender rests with Social-democracy and the Trades Unions. Any feeble desire to resist Hitler by violent means which may have been experienced by the leaders of the workers' Trade Unionist and political movement, was soon quenched by a consideration of the manner in which the Führer had reached the Chancellery. Hindenburg's repeated refusal to admit Hitler into the Government—he had even told Gregor Strasser that the "Bohemian corporal" should never be Chancellor so long as he was President of the Reich—and the care with which the octogenarian Marshal had respected the Constitution, made the Social-democrats believe that National-Socialism could only obtain absolute power by electoral means, and that even if it should achieve an absolute majority at the polls, it would still have to rule constitutionally. Hitler—so reasoned the Social-democrats and other Republicans—could not act otherwise save over the dead body of the Marshal. Fear of a conflict was responsible for this extraordinary illusion in the minds of the German Republican leaders. Up to the last the Socialists, Trades Unions and the Reichsbanner hoped that Hindenburg would ask for their assistance. This would have allowed them to oppose the counter-revolution "legally"—even, perhaps, in agreement with Herr Bumke. But supposing Hitler rose to power with Hindenburg's assistance? The consideration of such a possibility had never so much as entered the heads of the Social-democrats, the Trades Unions or the Reichsbanner. The confidence of the Socialists in the head of the State was so great that the Transport Union, which, during the period of von Papen's Government, had deposited its funds (R.M.15 million) in Holland, brought them back to Germany after Hitler became Chancellor. Hitler's oath of allegiance to the Constitution before Hindenburg was working wonders.

The manner of Hitler's arrival at the Chancellery discon-

certed the Republicans. There is no doubt that if National-Socialism had launched an attack on the State, the Reichsbanner would have rushed into the fray, for it was composed of men who would have fought well if they had been ordered to fight at all.

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All this, however, is purely episodical; the causes of the lack of resistance to Hitler are of deeper growth. The hopes which Social-democracy had placed in Hindenburg, the belief that Hitler would become more tractable with the responsibility of power, were merely the outward expression of the Socialists' pathological incapacity for action.

The reasons why Social-democracy—and in this connection I also include the Trades Unions—did not fight, are different from the reasons which prevented the Communists from fighting. It is therefore incorrect to speak of the surrender of the German people as though they were a homogeneous body.

Ever since 1875 German Social-democracy had been in process of becoming a purely reformist organisation. Towards the end of the century the revisionism of Edward Bernstein came to represent the theoretical axis of German Socialism; "The movement is everything" was the new and dangerous formula. After the first great war, Social-democracy definitely renounced revolution, and its programme was confined to strengthening the political and Trades Union organisation of the proletariat. The one aim of the Social-democrats, in fact, was to build up a great Party. The conditions stipulated by them as necessary for the implanting of Socialism were such as to make a Socialist triumph impossible in all countries for all time. Hermann Müller, in his prologue to the illustrated Heidelberg programme, had written a few years before the crisis: "Capitalist economy is ready for the socialisation of heavy industry. But this is not enough. Enormous numbers of workers, employees and officials are still entirely lacking in class-consciousness." This vision of society was a clear confession that Social-democracy had given up all hope of building Socialism in Germany. In theory, therefore, Social-democracy was not a revolutionary Party; neither could it be so in practice. The ideal of the Social-democrats was confined to obtaining higher wages, extending social insurances, building workmen's dwellings, and above all, to creating a perfect Socialist organisation, a vast and infallible bureaucratic machine. The Party would attain its objective, the Social-democrats thought, by the mere process of existing and growing. Just as certain individuals spend so much time and energy in keeping fit that in the end they become fit for nothing, so Social-democracy frittered away its strength in the task of organisation. The Social-democrats

built up, on the capitalist model, this enormous machine, and their leaders became its willing slaves; it was the machine which commanded and they who obeyed.

The staff of Social-democratic and Trades Unionist bureaucracy was three times as large as that of Krupp's huge enterprise. There were more than 300,000 salaried workers on the staff, of whom 52,650 were concerned with management, 162,325 were officials and secretaries, and the rest printers, transport workers, typists, clerks, etc. If we reckon that each member of the staff supported on an average two in family, we can see that German Socialist bureaucracy—and here I include the Free Trades Unions—maintained about a million Germans.

The political organisation of Social-democracy—not counting the Trades Unions—was in 1932 made up as follows: 33 provincial Federations, 121 Reichstag deputies, 419 provincial deputies, 353 paid Municipal councillors (Stadträte), 532 Landtage deputies, 947 mayors, 1,109 deputy mayors, 4,278 Kreistag deputies, 9,057 councillors (Stadtverordneten), 9,544 local groups, 1,021,777 affiliates (803,442 men and 218,335 women).

In the same year there were 5,449,373 members (both sexes) of the Free Trades Unions.

Social-democracy was naturally a wealthy Party. It owned 200 periodicals, of which two-thirds were daily papers, and which were printed in printing-offices belonging to the Party. These establishments alone, according to official data, were valued at RM.40 million (£2 million).

The fortune of the Free Trades Unions was also considerable. Their annual income in 1930 was RM.275 million (£13,750,000), and it is no exaggeration to say that the funds deposited in Banks, and those represented by printing-works, buildings, Education Centres, etc., belonging to organised workers in the Free Trades Unions, amounted to not less than RM.1,000 million (£50 million).

Another very wealthy organisation was the Co-operative Society for Production and Consumption, whose policy was more or less dictated by the Social-democrats.

It must, of course, be recognised that the desire of the German Socialists to own the strongest and best-organised movement in the world, had been fulfilled. The Social-democratic leaders, faithful to their interpretation of the Socialist theories, felt that their task consisted in preserving the superb political and Trades Union machinery by every means in their power. But this point of view was to result in catastrophe, for it paralysed the Socialist movement just when reaction threatened it with destruction.

In politics, as in any other form of struggle, to give up the attack means to give up the defence. Social-democracy not only made no attempt to carry out a revolution, but was also resolutely opposed to the destruction of the Weimar Constitution. The tragedy of the Socialists was that they could not resist Hitler by violence without causing a civil war, and, in consequence, a revolution. Fear of revolution forced them to surrender submissively to the National-Socialist executioner. Because they feared to die by another hand, Social-democracy committed suicide.

The Social-democrats had serious cause to doubt whether they could control the workers' movement once fighting had broken out in the streets. With no desire to implant Socialism, the Socialist leaders saw in the Communists a peril as great as, if not greater than, the Nazis. The Communists, on their side, strengthened this feeling by attacking the Social-democrats as violently as they did the Nazis. For the Communists, the Nazis were Fascist and the Social-democrats Social-Fascists. The great impulse of the German Communist movement also helped, therefore, to paralyse Social-democratic opposition to Hitler. And if Social-democracy did not resist, then no one could, not even the Communists themselves.

In theory a Party such as Social-democracy can renounce revolution and yet defend itself when a wave of reactionary terror threatens to overwhelm it. But, as I hope to have shown, in this case fear of subversion made Social-democracy incapable of any kind of defensive action. The destinies of German and European Socialism would have been different, however, if Social-democracy had thrown up a great leader. One of the virtues of every great statesman, from Cæsar to Lenin, by way of Cromwell and Napoleon, has been to divert his own political movement from the wrong track, and, in opposition to Pharisaical ideas and his Party's programme, to set it on the road to success. A task of this nature, which is immensely difficult, can only be carried out by a really great man. And in carrying it out, such a man must come into conflict with his Party, or at any rate with those members from which the Party receives its main stimulus. Thus Cæsar found himself opposed by his own democratic Party; Cromwell, the leader of Parliament, was forced to suppress Parliament, Napoleon to impose silence on the *avocats* in order to save the revolution, Lenin to break down the resistance of the Bolshevik Left to his new economic policy, the *Nep.* If in the gravest crisis of its history, Social-democracy had had a great leader, that leader could only have triumphed by breaking with the tradition of the movement. There can be no doubt that he

would not have been alone. In large sections of Social-democracy there was a strong desire to act, to fight, to save themselves. But the machine was more powerful than the mediocre leaders and the leaderless discontents. The rigidity of the machine, as has already been said, was the result of the rigidity of the theory, and both Party and men lacked the necessary elasticity to adapt themselves to the new situation. The Social-democrats continued to behave, even at the period of Hitler's arrival in power, as though they were living in normal times. Though their movement was threatened with dissolution by Nazi terrorism, the Socialist leaders continued their policy of agitating for wage increases, workers' dwellings and social insurances. No other course apparently presented itself to the minds of Otto Braun, Otto Wells, Breitscheid, Hermann Müller, Crispien, Löbe, Severing, Leipart, Grassmann, and the rest of the Social-democrat hierarchy. Such men had excellent qualities for running a large political party in ordinary times; they were good administrators, good speakers, good Ministers and even good Social-democrats. There was, however, something lacking in the Social-democratic Party, as in all the other anti-Fascist Parties of Germany: the presence of a great man, a political genius. The case of Germany in 1932, as that of Italy in 1920, proves that a gigantic and well-organised Socialist movement is not everything; it is not enough for the masses to want something and to build up their organisation; if they are to get what they want they must have leaders who are equal to the circumstances of the time. If it is true that the real statesman is nothing without the support of the masses, it is also true that badly-led masses are powerless in moments of crisis. On the German Left there was not a single man capable of playing the rôle which Hitler played on the Right. The Republican leaders were illustrious mediocrities; not one of them had the quality of greatness. In Hitler, on the other hand, there was a greatness, albeit demoniacal, negative and perverse. What is certain is that he was no ordinary man, like his antagonists.

Neither was there among the leaders of German Social-democracy an imaginative theoretician such as the Austrian Otto Bauer, nor a man of action of the stamp of Julius Deutsch, creator of the Schutzbund, the *para*-military organisation of the Austrian Socialists. The reason that Austrian Social-democracy offered armed resistance to the clerical-Fascist dictatorship of Dollfuss must be looked for in the guiding lines laid down for their Party by men like Bauer and Deutsch. The theoretical content of the Austrian Socialist movement differed from that of German Social-democracy inasmuch as for the Austrians the objective was more important than the organisation. Rigid

adherence to the Parliamentary system—characteristic of the Socialism of Hermann Müller—did not exist in the Austrian Party. In the circumstances the leaders of Austrian Social-democracy, foreseeing that an occasion might arise when Parliament could be a serious obstacle to the building-up of Socialism or the defence of the working-class and Socialist movement, stated in the Programme of Linz that a Socialist dictatorship could be resorted to as an extraordinary measure. This theoretical flexibility of Austrian Social-democracy helped to prevent the growth of the Communist organisation, and the weakness of Austrian Communism in its turn facilitated Socialist resistance, since the proletariat were not so divided as in Germany.

The Austrian Socialists lost a whole year, believing in the promise of the Social Christians to restore the Constitution. But in the Vienna fighting of February 1934 they at least saved their honour.

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The responsibility of the Communists for the collapse of the German workers' movement is little less than that of Social-democracy. In spite of its 250,000 members, a *para*-military organisation of 100,000 men, and 5 million votes in the country, the German Communist Party was as impotent as Social-democracy to resist Hitler. With only 50,000 members, the Bolsheviks seized power in Russia; how, therefore, can the failure of German Communism be explained? The causes of its surrender to National-Socialism are also of very deep origin.

The writing of history would hardly be worth while if the essential function of the historian were not to draw conclusions from past events in order to prevent mankind from repeating its former mistakes.

The German Communist Party was in 1932 the largest group of the Communist International. One of the things which most impressed me during my stay in Berlin was a Communist demonstration in the working-class districts. In any Social-democratic manifestation of a similar nature there were always innumerable officials, intellectuals, members of the *petite bourgeoisie*. The bulk of the Communist demonstrators, on the other hand, were manual labourers, many of them unemployed. The whole effect was one of strength and energy and of a challenge to Capitalist society, an effect which was entirely lacking in the Socialist demonstrations. Those Communist parades represented the strongest possible protest against the vice of resignation.

The German Communist Party was, however, as badly led as Social-democracy, if not more so. In 1932 the theoretical basis of German Communism—or rather of the Communist Inter-

national—was that laid down by Marx and Engels in 1848. The Communist leaders still believed that the proletariat had nothing to lose but their chains, and they adjusted their fighting tactics to that belief. The theory was false, however, for various reasons. In 1932 the workers had not only their chains to lose, but also an organisation built up by tremendous efforts during a whole century of struggle. What was even more important, however, was that not only might they lose their organisation, but also their skins. And the international proletariat had even more to lose, for they could by their actions imperil the Soviet Union. All this, in fact, was what actually occurred. The intelligent Communists now recognise that the policy of the Comintern from 1922 to 1934 was a stupendous failure. The Communist International itself acknowledged this in its VIIth Congress, when it effected a complete reversal of policy and adopted defensive tactics.

Karl Marx had once censured Lassalle for maintaining that there was no difference between one bourgeois group and another, and that all the bourgeoisie, from the point of view of the interests of the working class, was a reactionary whole. Nevertheless, in 1932 the Communist Party still looked on the Social-democrats as an organisation to be fought as fiercely as the Nazis. In the opinion of the Communist leaders, all other Parties formed a reactionary mass; they even went so far as to believe that the Social-democrats were more dangerous to the working classes than the Nazis. This false conception was caused by a momentary coincidence of the Nazi and Communist policies on one point: the need to discredit the Republic, to subvert order and to weaken the State. Social-democracy was, in respect of the Republic, a Conservative Party. And for the Communists the fall of the bourgeois Republic could be followed by nothing worse. Or if it were, such a régime would be only transitory. Capitalism, so ran the Communist reasoning, had been dealt a mortal blow. Hitler could not bring it back to life, and the proletariat could only lose their chains. "After Hitler it will be our turn," complacently said the Communist deputy Remmele in the Reichstag. It apparently did not occur to him that after Hitler it might well be the turn of cannibalism. Marx himself, who was a great optimist, had laid down one condition without which Socialism could not triumph: "If humanity continues to progress . . ." he had said.

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It has already been remarked that after the Fascist victory in Italy in 1922 the necessary conditions for the triumph of a Communist revolution had disappeared in Europe. The bourgeoisie had already taken the offensive, the States had re-

organised their progressive machinery, and the boom caused by general reconstruction and the adaptation of industries to peace production was removing the chaos which immediately followed the war, and behind which the Bolsheviks had seized power in Russia. The German Communist revolution lasted from 1918 to 1920. Apart from the fighting in Berlin, which has already been described, there were tremendous street battles in the industrial districts. The Saxon Communists, led by Max Hölz, were in control of part of the region in April 1919, and continued fighting for nine days. The struggle lasted for two months in Bavaria, where Kurt Eisner and his companions set up a Soviet Republic, with a Red terror, and many casualties among the proletariat and the troops of von Epps. In March and April 1920 the Red guards conquered the Ruhr and for two weeks carried on a tremendous struggle with the Army. In March 1921 the Communist Party declared a general strike in Hamburg, and the resultant clashes with the police lasted for three days.

Bolshevism was, however, doomed to failure in Germany, for internal and external opposition was insuperable. In 1919 the Allies, in Paris, had said to the men of the new German régime, "We will have no dealings with anyone who has not been appointed democratically by public opinion. . . . As long as the Bolshevik menace remains we will not recognise the new German State." And Clemenceau had announced that if these conditions were not fulfilled, both the blockade and the war would go on.

It was, however, obvious that as long as the civil war lasted in Russia, it would be impossible for the European political situation to become stabilised. In 1920 the Communists could still hope for a revolutionary movement in Germany, but there is no doubt that the prospects of a Soviet Germany were always insignificant.

If up to 1922 the chances of a Communist victory in Germany had been small, after 1922 they disappeared altogether. Reaction had taken the offensive, and the European working classes found that they must change their tactics, if they were to save themselves. The Comintern did not give warning that a new situation had arisen, and the Communists of all countries continued the struggle on offensive lines. Defensive tactics were imposed on international Socialism for the simple reason that since it lacked the power to gain control of the State, any attempt at revolution would strengthen Right-wing extremism—that is to say, Fascism. In Germany this process was crystal clear.

Communist leaders were not in any way disturbed by the advance of Hitlerism, for they considered the downfall of German capitalism imminent and certain. German capitalism, however,

was a gigantic edifice which, when it collapsed, would crush beneath it not only the German proletariat and the leaders of the Communist Party, but the whole of Europe as well.

The Communists had exaggerated *ad absurdum* the theory of continuous progress and the materialist conception of history. They had entirely left out of account the fact that man is a creature of flesh and blood, and that in history—which they treated as a mythical entity—he is an active factor. With the whole of Communist theory, therefore, condensed into a revolutionary fatalism, the German Communist Party saw in Hitler an ally who was working, as the Communists themselves were, to hasten the disintegration of the Republic and bring about the bankruptcy of the German State. The Communist member, Richard Müller, therefore proposed in Osnabrück a united front of Hitlerites and Communists, and later on, in 1931, the Communist Party supported a plebiscite promoted by the Nazis in order to bring about the dissolution of the Prussian Diet.

From the end of the last war to the arrival of Hitler, the German Communists did not cease to raise the barricades. In April and October 1923 there were armed Communist risings in Hamburg and Mülheim, in which twenty-two men were killed. In May 1929 the Communists of Berlin launched a revolution—Social-democracy was in power at the time—with an impetus which alarmed the whole of Germany. This *putsch* was a mistake and was doomed to failure, but the Communists fought like heroes, ready to conquer or to die. The barricade fighting was concentrated in the Berlin working-class district of Wedding—known as the "red fortress"—and for four days the workers faced Severing's powerful "Schuppos". On the fifth day, however, they had to surrender, leaving nineteen dead in the streets.

In the summer of 1931 the German Communist Party once again unchained a revolution. In the Bülowplatz of Berlin the struggle between the workers and the police lasted a whole night, and three men were killed. The Communists also raised barricades in Gelsenkirchen and Essen, both large industrial centres.

German Communism was on the offensive for ten years after the birth of Fascism, whose triumph was chiefly due to the fear of the Bolshevik peril. And in January 1932, with the Catholic Minister Brüning in the Chancellery, the German Communist Party once more decided to launch a revolution. To begin with, they decreed a national general strike throughout the whole of Germany. The Berlin workers consolidated themselves in some districts, without actually fighting, and there were disturbances in the rest of Germany. This was the last Communist revolution, however. The general strike was a complete failure;

not even the members of the Communist Party obeyed orders, and in the whole of Germany only 30,000 to 40,000 ceased work. In Berlin a few trams failed to run; nothing more. The Party was still trying to keep the proletariat in a state of constant agitation, but the masses, including the militant Communists, were already weary.

The German Communist Party, like all other Communist Parties, depended for guidance on the Comintern. The Central Committee of the German Party was naturally made up of those individuals who enjoyed the greatest confidence of the International. And those who enjoyed the greatest confidence of the International were, of course, those who most unquestioningly accepted its policy. The natural consequence of this situation was that the German Communist Party lacked any stable and spontaneous leadership of its own, and had to obey the orders of men who did not live in Germany and who could more easily make mistakes in appraising the internal situation of Germany than a German subject.

Even with the exemplary discipline of the Communists, it was difficult for the Comintern to find men who were ready at all times to obey its orders. The disagreements between the leaders of the German group and those of the Communist International resulted in a constant change in the membership of the German Central Committee. In 1923 the leaders of German Communism were Brandler, Thälheimer and Ernest Meyer; in 1924 Scholem, Kirsch, Katz, Schwartz and Ruth Fischer, and subsequently Ruth Fischer, Maslow and Urbahns. After that the confidence of the Comintern was given to Ernest Thälmann and his group.

The Party's policy alienated excellent fighters from German Communism, men of great worth in European Socialism. After 1924 Arthur Rosenberg and Paul Levi—both Communist deputies in the Reichstag—broke away from the Party, together with the Communist group of the Fürth (Nüremberg) Council, Robert Oeheschläger, leader of the Communist Workers' Sports Federation, Michel Rodenstock, founder of the Party, Albrecht, leader of the Frontkämpferbund (the Communist militia), and the twenty groups of the Lenin League of the Suhl district. All these personalities and organisations went over to the Social-democratic Party.

On the other hand, the groups and militant members who had abandoned Social-democracy did not for the most part join the Communist Party, but, like the large Seydewitz section, declared themselves independent.

As far as the general lines of the movement were concerned,

the Communists had exhausted themselves by their tactics of incessant agitation; but they also committed small blunders which provided ammunition for their enemies to use against them. For instance, the Co-operatives of Production and Consumption were managed in Germany by Councils which the members elected democratically, and in 1928 the management of the Halle Co-operative passed into the hands of the Communists. This was a commercial organisation which had been administered up to then by the Social-democrats, and which enjoyed considerable prosperity. When the Communists arrived, however, they used up the funds in electoral propaganda, and the organisation not unnaturally went bankrupt. The Social-democrats were horrified at such administrative sacrilege, and it cannot be denied that in this case the Communists abused the confidence which had been placed in them.

The Communist movement in Germany was exceptionally important, not only because it could count on 5 million votes, and on the support of the most militant section of the proletariat, but also because it was working in a nation which was ripe for Socialism. The Communist Party and Social-democrats between them could muster 12 million votes, so that, even leaving out of account the Germans who voted for Nazism because they thought that in so doing they were favouring some kind of Socialism, it can be seen that the tendency of the German people was to seek a Socialist solution. The Communist Party, in the circumstances, was called on to be the vanguard of the great German Socialist Army, since the other Parties were either demagogic like the Nazis, or lacking in revolutionary impulse like the Social-democrats. The leadership of the German Communist Party, however, was not consistent with the importance of the movement. Since the last war the Reich had never at any time ceased to be threatened by civil war. But the State had organised its police defences with great efficiency, and a German revolution therefore presented greater difficulties for the Communist Party than the Russian revolution had done for the Bolsheviks. A real statesman, a Lenin or a Stalin, was needed at the head of the German Communist movement if the complicated situation of Germany were to be faced with any prospect of success. Such a leader must also know how to manœuvre, and must have intellectual flexibility and the inspiration of a political genius. It was not enough to be a good Communist and a fanatical agitator, like Thälmann.

Ernst Thälmann, the leader of the German Communist Party in 1932, was a docker who had done good work as a Trades Union leader, but who was manifestly incapable of handling such

delicate machinery as that of the Communist Party. Up to the last war Thälmann had been a Social-democrat, afterwards becoming one of the founders of the Independent Socialist Party, and subsequently collaborating in the foundation of the Communist Party. From 1924 until the triumph of Hitler he represented the Party uninterruptedly in the Reichstag, and, as we have seen, he was a candidate in the Presidential elections of 1932, when he obtained 5 million votes. These votes, however, did not represent adherence to him personally—for he was not popular in the country—but to the idea of revolutionary Socialism. A figure of national prestige would have obtained some few million more votes than Thälmann did.

Thälmann always remained the dockers' agitator, far more suited for Trades Unionist than political action. In the eyes of the Comintern he was an ideal leader, for "Teddy"—as he was known familiarly—would never have dared to call in question the wisdom of the International resolutions; less still to discuss them or fight against them. His Marxism was as rigid as the Parliamentarianism of Social-democracy. His speeches lacked subtlety; they were the harangues of a general who only knows how to take the offensive, and in his political tactics he was ignorant of the conceptions of withdrawal and re-formation. Any army led by such methods would suffer continual defeats. German Communism was in practice as much paralysed as Social-democracy, for it was only ready to fight for the dictatorship of the proletariat and would not allow any compromise with the other Socialist Parties or with those of the Liberal bourgeoisie. The Communists called for a united front formed from below, that is to say, for the union of all the rank-and-file Socialists. As is only natural, the Social-democratic leaders saw in this an attempt to withdraw from them the support of the masses, and they ended by fearing the Communists more than the Nazis. The Communists, on their side, considered the Social-democrats a curb to the revolutionary impulse of the proletariat, and feared the Nazis themselves less than Social-democracy. This battle between Socialists and Communists naturally worked to Hitler's advantage.

The blindness of the Communist Party to the National-Socialist peril did not disappear until months after the Reichstag fire. In 1932 the defeat of the German proletariat could already be foreseen. The failure of the German Communist general strike in January and the surrender of Social-democracy in Prussia were unmistakable signs of the approaching tragedy. In the meantime the Communist Party had wasted its energies in continual manœuvres, and its forces were demoralised. What can be said of a general who, on the eve of a great battle, wears

out his troops with marches and countermarches? This is, however, what the Communist leaders in effect did in 1931 and 1932. And if the Communist masses were weary and the Social-democratic leaders did not want to exhaust their own men in defence of their honour, their organisation and their very lives, how could there be any possibility of an imminent Soviet triumph in Germany?

In spite of everything, however, the Communist Party still believed in a speedy Communist victory. At the reopening of the Reichstag, which had been elected in July 1932, Klara Zetkin, who, as the oldest member of the Chamber, was made provisional President, delivered a disturbing speech in which she said that the Soviets would soon arrive in Germany. Hitler had obtained 13,700,000 votes for that same Parliament, and 230 of his deputies had been returned. To state in front of 230 Nazi deputies that Communism would soon be triumphant in Germany was a gesture of the most extraordinarily provocative nature. Not only that: it was what Hitler had himself been saying, and it was the belief that this statement was true which had brought him the financial support of German industry. The Communist Party made the worst possible use of their strength; they threatened blows without being able to strike them.

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On January 30th, 1933, the German Communist movement saw Hitler enter the Chancellery, and only had strength enough to shout, "Down with Hitler!"

Faced by the collapse of German Socialism, the Communist International was finally forced to realise that a radical change of policy had taken place, and in the VIIth Congress the following resolution was approved:

> "Under the conditions of a political crisis . . . if . . . it should be possible and necessary in the interests of the proletariat to form a government of the united proletarian front or of the popular anti-fascist front, which will not yet be a government of proletarian dictatorship but will undertake to carry out decisive measures against Fascism and reaction, the Communist Party must procure the formation of such a government. . . . To the extent that the united front government really takes decided measures against the counter-revolutionary financial magnates and their fascist agents and in no way restricts the activities of the Communist Party nor the struggles of the working class, the Communist Party will support this government in every way. As regards the problem of the participation of the Communists in a united

front government, this will be solved according to the concrete situation in each case."

This change of tactics on the part of the Comintern was a wise one. It had, however, one defect: it came twelve years too late.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

HITLER IN POWER

ADOLF HITLER had risen to power without having recourse to violence. The National-Socialist procedure of conquering the State was similar to that of Benito Mussolini; just as the King of Italy appointed Mussolini as Prime Minister, so Hindenburg nominated Hitler as Chancellor. As everyone knows, the march on Rome merely consisted in the Blackshirts taking train for the Eternal City as soon as they learnt that Victor Emmanuel had instructed the Duce to form a Government. On October 31st, 1922, the Fascist bands paraded before the King and Mussolini, with the same enthusiasm as that of the Storm Troopers who marched past Hindenburg and Hitler on January 30th, 1933. In both cases, too, Fascism began by governing in coalition with other parties. Mussolini, at first, presided over a Cabinet containing some members of the "old régime", equivalent to the German Catholics and democrats. The circumstances in which Mussolini and Hitler rose to power are similar in other respects as well. Two months before entering the Chancellery, the Führer noticed that heavy industry had ceased to assist National-Socialism. Hitler's movement was bankrupt. Italian Fascism had also exhausted its funds three months before Mussolini became leader of the Government. In fact the Italian Industrial Federation informed the Duce, through the intermediary of the Secretary General, Signor Olivetti, that they would not continue to finance the Fascist Party.

Mussolini took five years to destroy the non-Fascist Parties. For some time the Liberal Press continued to appear, although under censorship. Hitler, however, could not wait so long, and in six months he had imposed the Gleichschaltung, the moulding into uniformity of German policy and administration, the totalitarian State.

We have already seen how Schleicher, by breaking with the Presidential *camarilla* and the reactionary parties, had brought about the reconciliation of the men of the Harzburg Front. This front was now in power. Papen was Vice-Chancellor; Hugen-

berg Minister of Economy. Seldte, the leader of the Steel Helmets, was also a Minister. Von Neurath, Schwerin-Krosigk, and von Blomberg were the remaining personalities of the Cabinet. In reality, power was in the hands of the German Nationalists; the whole of German economy, nutrition, agriculture and commerce was controlled by Hugenberg. Nevertheless, Hermann Göring was a serious menace to the German Nationalists in the Prussian Government. The strength of the Nazi member, Frick, Reich Minister of the Interior, was more nominal than effective. The Nazis then created the Ministry of Propaganda and placed Josef Göbbels at its head. Hitler wanted absolute power for National-Socialism, and no doubt realised that the principal thing in attacking a fortress is to open the first breach. This breach was now opened, and it was urgently necessary to get rid of the German Nationalists, of von Papen, of the Presidential *camarilla*, and even of Hindenburg himself. On that same 30th of January, 1933, after Schleicher's fall, a fresh struggle began between Hitler on the one side, and Papen and Hugenberg on the other.

German Capitalism, like the proletariat, was divided. There were Conservative industrialists such as Hugenberg, who wanted to resolve the economic problem of Germany without foreign adventures, and there were the desperate industrialists, suicidal capitalism, which, like the greater part of the Army, wanted war. The first feared Bolshevism and looked on Hitler, before he rose to power, as a social guarantee. But they were fully conscious that National-Socialism could not rule without creating economic chaos, without ruining the nation and dragging her to catastrophe. The ideal, in short, of Conservative Capitalism and the great landowners, was to support Hitler in order to achieve a victory of the German Nationalists—men incapable of making bold experiments, but loyal to their class, and with their feet firmly planted on the ground. The Steel Helmets were the reactionary Conservative militia, drawn from the "prudent" bourgeoisie.

Hugenberg, the most characteristic political representative of this Conservative Capitalism, proposed to solve the crisis by an increasing identification of the interests of his class with those of the State. His idea was that the latter should be responsible for industrial losses, thus prolonging the life of German Capitalism. But if this were to be achieved, it would be necessary for the German Nationalists to enjoy full and undisturbed power. It would be impossible to carry out their policy if they shared their power with Hitler, for the latter, as the agent of this suicidal Capitalism, of a humiliated Army, and of all those with a grudge against society, had the task of preparing the nation for war and setting fire to the world.

A lengthy period of rule by the Hugenberg Government would have given the moderate capitalists an opportunity to put their private affairs in order, and such was the desire of the less audacious industrialists and the Junkers.

Hugenberg himself needed to gain control of the State in order to avoid bankruptcy. His business friends had stated publicly that he was ruined. The news spread over the whole of Germany, and he felt it necessary to send a note to the papers stating, "Herr Hugenberg, in order to combat certain rumours, has entrusted ex-Minister Herr Neuhaus with the task of auditing the accounts of his business undertakings." Herr Neuhaus, a member of the German National Party, surprisingly enough found the accounts in order.

Alfred Hugenberg was a banker, a captain of industry and a Press magnate, whose intervention in German politics had consistently helped him out of difficulties when his affairs were in a delicate condition. In 1925 his Agrarian Bank had to close its doors, but before the bankruptcy was made public he offered a parcel of shares to the Prussian State, and so saved the situation. Hugenberg had begun his career in the banking world, soon becoming manager of banks in Posen and Frankfürt, as a result of which he gained a place on the Board of Directors of many and varied undertakings. He subsequently turned his attention to industry, and for eleven years was a collaborator of Krupp von Bohlen. Without abandoning industrial and banking affairs, he began to devote most of his energies to the newspaper business, becoming in the fulness of time a German Press magnate, the William Hearst of Germany. In 1932 he owned 93 per cent. of the shares of the Scherf Editorial, which published twenty-two newspapers, including the *Berliner Lokal Anzeiger* and *Der Tag*, the weekly papers *Montag* and *Woche*, the *Gartenaube*, the *Berliner Nachtausgabe* (with a number of daily editions) and the *Exports and Imports Review*, which was published in various languages. Hugenberg was also in control of the Vera, a trust of forty-four provincial newspapers which appeared in Darmstadt, Elbenfeld, Munich, Stuttgart, Halle, Magdeburg and other cities.

Hugenberg's forty papers received their news from the Telegraphen Union, an enormous agency which also belonged to him. This Union had various powerful affiliates, such as the Dammert, the German Commercial Service, the Western German Commercial Service, the Western Editorial and the Wolff Association. Hugenberg also controlled an important publicity firm, and owned the majority of shares in the advertising firms of Naasenstein, Vogler, and Daude & Co. In fact, he controlled not only the publicity of his forty papers, but also that of the Independent Press.

Apart from the Press and the news and publicity agencies, Hugenberg also owned UFA, the large firm of film producers and distributors. UFA had more than thirty picture theatres in Germany, of which ten were in Berlin, and supplied two-thirds of the German cinemas with its productions.

As has already been said, the general crisis of German economy had considerably affected Hugenberg's undertakings, and it was only natural that the leader of the German nationalists should hasten to obtain for his Party all the Ministerial portfolios in Hitler's Government connected with Economy. The difficulty would be to keep them, for Hitler was no Otto Braun, nor a Leipart, nor even a Papen or a Schleicher.

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Adolf Hitler took good care to prevent the Presidential *camarilla* from playing the same trick on him which it had played on Brüning, Papen and Schleicher. Hermann Göring, Reich Minister without Portfolio and Commissioner of Aviation, was made Minister of the Interior of the Prussian Government—in fact Prime Minister of Prussia. In his speech to the Prussian Chiefs of Police, Göring said: "The police does not exist in order to look after eighty or a hundred thousand criminals in the prisons. We must put an end to this false humanitarianism, and the police will have to do certain things which may perhaps appear very hard, but which are absolutely necessary." Hitler had declared in Leipzig that he would roll the heads of his enemies in the sand. And he meant what he said.

In case the 100,000 "Schuppos" should not be sufficient, Göring formed a Nazi auxiliary police corps of 80,000 men. The Hitler terror had already begun, although there was no repetition of the disturbances of August 1932. Papen declared privately that he considered the repressive measures adopted by the new Prussian Minister of the Interior excessive, and the non-Nazi Ministers of the coalition became alarmed at the progress of their brutal associates in the control of the State. Papen, Hugenberg—and Schleicher—began to intrigue with the Presidential *camarilla*.

In this Government no one trusted his fellow. Hugenberg was seeking guarantees for the future, and suggested to Hitler that the coalition should last four years, a proposal which was accepted. The new Government could count on 247 deputies in the Reichstag, but for an absolute majority it needed 292, and could not therefore rule with Parliament. It could have gained the ninety votes of the Catholic Centre and the Bavarian People's Party at a small cost, but everyone, National-Socialists and Nationalists, wanted fresh elections—the former so that they should not have to

depend on Conservative groups in the Reichstag, and the latter because they were certain of a Nazi defeat.

Hindenburg finally authorised Hitler to dissolve the Reichstag, and elections were arranged for March 5th.

To the great astonishment of the Social-democrats, the Nazis declared at the election meetings and in the Press, that whatever might be the result of the polls, they would remain in control. "We have not arrived in power", they said, "merely in order to go away again. . . . Such precious conquests cannot be abandoned."

Meanwhile, the electoral propaganda of the Left-wing Parties was meeting with serious obstacles. The Liberal, Social-democratic and Communist Press was being implacably persecuted; the Government suspended unfriendly newspapers for a week or fourteen days, while the *Vorwärts*, the *Berliner Tageblatt* and the *Rote Fahne* no longer had a free circulation. The curious thing is that the Lefts were to a certain extent satisfied with this persecution, for as they still viewed the situation as though things were normal in Germany, they felt that Hitler's repressive policy would diminish the electoral strength of Nazism. Naïve Social-democrats found a certain enchantment in going back in mind to the days of Bismarck. But the days of Bismarck had gone past recall.

The end of February was approaching, and the Nazis were still determined not to loosen their hold on power, even if the whole German people should vote against them, while on the other hand the Socialists were becoming increasingly convinced that Hitler would suffer a fresh defeat. Each in its own way, all the political parties were optimistic. Hitler realised that he might not have public opinion on his side, but—what was far more important—he could rely on the resources of the State. The Lefts knew that Hitler was Chancellor and Göring the Lord of Prussia, but they were certain that the country would repudiate the Nazis now more firmly than ever.

The least optimistic were those traditionalists who were in the Government with Adolf Hitler, Hermann Göring and Josef Göbbels. Papen, Hugenberg and Oskar von Hindenburg had not been alarmed at the Nazi protests that they would remain in the Government even if they lost the elections, because the private pact between themselves and Hitler stipulated that the coalition should last at least four years, independently of national opinion. They did not trust Hitler, however. It was already clear to them that the Nazis would try to throw them out of the Government as soon as possible, and to proclaim Hitler lord of Germany, above even Hindenburg himself. Hitler, for his part, knew that the *camarilla* had begun to intrigue against him. And both were right.

The Nazis began to prepare their *coup d'état*, for they knew that if they allowed the elections to take place in normal conditions their losses would be serious. They were determined to triumph on March 5th.

Papen, Hugenberg and Oskar von Hindenburg, however, with the collaboration of Schleicher, prepared a counter-stroke. In the second fortnight of February rumours circulated that the Nazis proposed to get rid of their collaborators in the Government on the very day of the elections, and to submit Hitler's appointment as President of the Reich to a plebiscite. Papen, that untiring intriguer, was again the happiest man in the world, and at once set about to weave a new web wherein to ensnare Adolf Hitler. He had an interview with Hugenberg, at which the leaders of the Steel Helmets, Seldte and Düsterberg, were present, and also held discussions with General Schleicher, who was accompanied by General Hammerstein, and with the President of the Reich and his son Oskar.

The result of this intrigue was a plan of defence suggested by Schleicher and explained by Papen to Hugenberg, the Steel Helmet leaders, and the two Hindenburgs, from all of whom it received approval. The best of the Steel Helmet troops were to be concentrated on Election Day in Berlin, where they were to occupy the centre of the city and protect the Wilhelmstrasse. Various Reichswehr regiments were to be held in readiness at Döberitz, twenty miles from Berlin, to which town Marshal Hindenburg was to go on Sunday, March 5th, in order to "assist at a Reichswehr parade".

In this way Hindenburg would safely weather the storm. If the Hitlerites attempted a *coup d'état*, the Storm Troopers would be met in Berlin by 10,000 Steel Helmets, who would defend the centre of the city until relieved by Reichswehr forces.

Hitler learnt of the *camarilla's* plans, however, and ordered Röhm to inform Seldte that if the Steel Helmets made any move, the S.A. would also be mobilised. The *camarilla*, on finding that their plans had been discovered, began to fear the consequences of a conflict among the Government forces, and the scheme of sending Hindenburg away from Berlin came to nothing.

Göring, in the meantime, had been untiring in his task of persecuting the Republicans and Communists. The police made a search of the headquarters of the Communist Party—the "Karl Liebknecht House"—and Göring discovered some mysterious catacombs in which were found plans for a German Communist revolution. These plans, which the Nazi Minister promised to publish without delay, weighed many kilos, and among them was said to be some high explosive.

On February 27th, 1933, at a quarter past nine at night, the sky of Berlin was suddenly lit up with flames issuing from the massive building of the Reichstag. The Nazi leaders were soon on the spot, and Hitler was heard to exclaim: "*Ein Zeichen vom Himmel!*" ("A blessing from heaven!"). The Government stated publicly that the fire was the work of Communists.

On the same night Hitler banned the whole of the workers' Press, all the propaganda leaflets and posters of both Marxist Parties, and all their political meetings, whether held in the open air or indoors. There wanted less than a week to the elections. The next day Hindenburg signed a decree annulling the Constitution, and on March 1st a further decree imposed postal, telegraphic and telephonic censorship throughout the country.

National-Socialism had triumphed. Now it could go to the elections with every confidence.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

THE TERROR

THE REICHSTAG fire produced the effect which the Nazis desired. The crime created a deep impression on the public mind, and even for those who did not believe the Government version, the event was, at the very least, disturbing and painful.

It is obvious that the chief object of the Nazi plot was to defeat the Communist Party in the forthcoming elections, so that, with the Communists out of the Reichstag, National-Socialism could more easily obtain the two-thirds majority necessary for the reform of the Constitution. Hitler would never have achieved this before March 5th by merely suppressing the Party, for then the Communists would have voted for Social-democracy. But in this immediate objective—the destruction of the Communist Party—the Nazis failed, for in spite of the terror, the Communists returned eighty-one members to the Reichstag, a figure large enough to cause considerable disquiet among National-Socialist ranks. Hitler was thereupon forced to take off the gloves and to give orders for the Communists to be arrested as they arrived in Parliament. From this it should not be inferred that the bold attack represented by the Reichstag fire did not momentarily favour National-Socialism. It was a skilful and cunning blow, which saved the Nazis from suffering a considerable setback at the polls. The speed with which Hitler made use of the "*Zeichen vom Himmel*" in order to hamper the freedom of movement of the Lefts and to seize further power, spread confusion throughout all the anti-Nazi Parties, and within a few hours raised the

Chancellor to the position of absolute dictator. Even for those, like Papen and Hugenberg, who soon discovered the hand of Göring in the affair, the Reichstag fire gave evidence of the enormous offensive capacity of National-Socialism, and was an indication of what Hitler was ready to do to remain in power.

The repressive measures carried out by Hitler immediately after the burning of the Reichstag had been prepared long beforehand. Nothing was left to improvisation. The fire itself, as was subsequently proved, was the result of a carefully thought-out plan. The crime was carried out with such extraordinary dexterity, that even to this day the exact relations between the Nazis and Marinus van der Lubbe, the only man who was found guilty at the trial, are not known, nor perhaps will they ever be.

Marinus van der Lubbe, a Dutch subject, who was accused, condemned to death, and finally executed as the only author of the Reichstag fire, had never belonged to the Communist Party. He was a degenerate, a mentally defective, homeless and workless, a social outcast. He was arrested by the police in Door No. 5 of the Reichstag after the fire had broken out, wearing nothing but a pair of trousers, and he had apparently used his shirt and other rags in an attempt to set light to the building. According to a statement by Göring, he was in possession of a Communist Party card and other papers which implicated the Communists and Social-democrats. This, however, is completely untrue. It is also untrue that van der Lubbe was acting as a voluntary *agent provocateur* of the Nazis.

From the technicians' report it appeared that the fire had broken out in various places simultaneously. The incendiaries had used an enormous amount of inflammable material, including a large quantity of petrol, and it was this material which must have been responsible for the fire, for the Dutchman's few rags could never have caused an outbreak fierce enough to destroy the central hall of the Reichstag before the arrival of the firemen. Nevertheless, van der Lubbe, who was an obvious pyromaniac, and who had already started three other fires in different parts of Berlin, looked on the Reichstag conflagration as his own unaided achievement. From the reconstruction of events during the trial it was found, however, that two minutes and five seconds after he entered the Reichstag the central part of the building was a mass of flames. There can therefore be no doubt that others besides himself had had a hand in the game.

The men who set fire to the Reichstag with petrol and other materials could not have escaped by any of the normal exits, for all the doors were immediately surrounded by the police.

There was, however, a subterranean gallery—where the heating system was installed—which joined the Parliament cellars to the residence of the President of the Reichstag. This President was at the time Herr Göring. Through this tunnel the unknown incendiaries must have brought their inflammable material, and by the same path they must have fled. And these incendiaries could only have been Nazis or Nazi agents, for it is inconceivable that anyone could have entered the house of the Reichstag President armed with gallons of petrol and other material, and have gone away again, without being noticed. It so happens that in Göring's official residence a large detachment of S.S. troops and secret police agents were on guard. This aspect of the mystery has apparently been solved: the Nazis set fire to the Reichstag, and were responsible for the fiercest part of the conflagration, which at once enveloped the centre of the building.

As regards the exact connection of van der Lubbe with the Nazis in the planning and carrying out of the crime, it is believed by some, including Dimitrov, that Lubbe must have talked in the underworld of Berlin of his scheme to fire the Reichstag, and that, thanks to the abundance of spies, tale-bearers and informers with whom the capital was infested, the news soon reached the ears of high Nazi officials. The Nazis no doubt knew, therefore, that Lubbe would be in the Reichstag at a certain day and hour, but they naturally did not tell him that they too would be there, and he never suspected their rôle in the affair. This ignorance would account for his curious behaviour during the trial. He was proud of his fire, and highly resented what he considered were attempts to share with him the glory of his achievement. He obstinately insisted that no one had helped him; that he alone was the author of the crime . . . and he genuinely believed what he said.

In deciding to hold a public trial the Hitlerites were undoubtedly sure of their ground; the Dutchman would not in any case be able to say more than he knew, and what he knew of the Nazi share in the crime was little or nothing.

There are still, however, various loose ends in the mystery. How did the Nazis find out the day and hour when Lubbe planned to go to the Reichstag, without arousing his suspicions? Is it absolutely certain that Lubbe was not in contact with the Nazis on the night of the fire? The accused actually confessed in one of his lucid moments that he had been in the company of Nazis that evening. It is quite possible that his pyromania tended to exclude any mental associations likely to refute the idea that he was the only author of the crime, thus creating in him a condition of amnesia, the inability to recall former thoughts and

actions. I will not enlarge on this theme, however, since I can add nothing to what has already been said by those who were present at the trial, and for anti-Nazi observers this point is really the only obscure one.

Göring was quite certain that van der Lubbe's implication in the crime would clear the Nazis of all blame. The trial showed, however, that the Dutchman was not a Communist and had never had anything to do with the Communist Party. It also made it clear that others besides van der Lubbe had set fire to the Reichstag and that they must have entered and left the building by means of the underground tunnel leading to Göring's residence. No impartial enquirer was in any doubt as to the culpability of the Nazis. And the unexpected, in the form of the Bulgarian Communist Dimitrov, suddenly placed the Government in a very disagreeable situation. Dimitrov by his extraordinary audacity gave a completely different bias to the trial, so that what were to be proceedings against the German Communist Party became by his intervention proceedings against the Nazis.

The police had detained as supposed co-authors of the crime, Ernst Torgler, President of the Communist group in the Reichstag, who gave himself up voluntarily to the authorities, and three Bulgarian Communists, Dimitrov, Popov and Tanev.

Dimitrov was the sensation of the trial. In biting language he attacked the omnipotent Göring, and made continuous thrusts at the Nazi régime and its supporters. His brave conduct caused a natural astonishment, and he in fact saved himself by his audacity, for in the space of two days he attracted a universal attention which would have made it difficult for the Nazis to get rid of him without causing a scandal. It has been suggested that this audacity was due to the fact that he considered his position hopeless. He probably felt that if the Nazis did not actually assassinate him, they would condemn him to perpetual imprisonment in a concentration camp, and with the prospect of only a few days of life or freedom before him, he may have decided to make the most of them by holding Herr Göring and the whole Nazi system up to ridicule. And National-Socialism had just arrived in power, and had no desire to stir up international feeling against itself.

The Tribunal absolved Torgler, Dimitrov, Popov and Tanev, but the first-named was sent to a concentration camp. Dimitrov was liberated and left for Moscow, where he was given the homage which was his due.

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It was now obvious that the elections of March 5th would be held in an atmosphere of terror. The police had begun to take

those measures "which may perhaps appear very hard, but which are absolutely necessary", ordered by Hermann Göring. Answering the protests of Hugenberg's Ministers, Göring proclaimed on March 1st: "I feel that I am strong enough to assume every responsibility." But the truth was that responsible power no longer existed in Germany.

From their comfortable office chairs the leaders of the Free Trades Unions (Leipart, Grassmann and Aufhäuser) issued a tragic order, which said in effect: "Save himself who can!" For the first time in the history of German Socialism the Unions went to the polls as a separate body from Social-democracy. Or rather they did not go to the polls at all. Their leaders agreed to leave the workers free to vote for whom they liked; this time there was no sign of the traditional manifesto: "Vote for Social-democracy!" In their innocence they believed that if they kept away from politics, Hitler would respect their organisation.

Opposition to National-Socialism was muzzled; only the Hitlerites were free on the eve of the elections to carry out propaganda. The anti-Nazi press had been banned, and many Socialist and Communist leaders imprisoned. Bodies of militant workers were found floating in streams and canals.

On Election Day 80,000 Brown-shirts kept guard. In spite of everything, however, Hitler obtained only 43·9 per cent. of the votes. The electoral strength of the German Nazis and Nationalists gave the Government Parties a small majority in the Reichstag; 52 per cent. of adult Germans voted for Hitler and Hugenberg. But the Nazi dreams of achieving a victory great enough to allow them to alter the Constitution were shattered. When it is remembered that these elections were carried out beneath a wave of terror, it can be seen that Hitler suffered a greater defeat on March 5th than on November 6th.

After the Elections, National-Socialism hastened towards its goal. The police arrested all Communist deputies who had not already been detained. The Social-democrats believed, however, that they would receive better treatment.

The Trades Union Press reproduced part of Hitler's speeches in order to show the Nazis that there was a possibility of arriving at an agreement. Outstanding collaborators of the *Gewerkschafts-Zeitung*, the weekly Trades Union Gazette, made every effort to prove to Hitler that the new régime could not exist without the workers' Trades Unions, and that these organisations, far from being an obstacle, would rather be an asset to Nazi "national reconstruction".

In a still more official manner the Trades Unions made known their new policy. On April 13th, 1933, Hans Ehrenteit stated

in the Provincial Congress of the Free Trades Unions of Hamburg: "We are ready and able to fulfil the hopes and desires of the proletariat in the economic-social sphere, in agreement with the present rulers. We do not doubt for one moment that the events of March 5th represent a revolution of enormous depth and scope; a revolution which is to surpass the liberal and capitalist economic system; a revolution putting an end to that democratic parliamentarianism which for the past few years has been so deceptive. The Trades Unions have built bridges to the State and to its rulers. We must now proclaim our attitude in respect of the State and the nation. This attitude will have a foundation. The best course, in our opinion, is to build bridges for those who, through ignorance, would wish, today more than yesterday, to destroy the Trades Union movement, and we hope to be able to assist in this. The function of the Trades Unions must be to continue to fulfil their social and economic mission. This same duty has been carried out by the present Government of the Reich, and collaboration between the Trades Unions and the Government is therefore possible." (No. 14 of the *Freie Gewerkschaft.*)

On May 1st Adolf Hitler announced in his speech in the Tempelhof, before a delirious crowd, "The national revolution has begun."

On May 2nd, by order of the Government, Hitler's troops seized the property of the workers' organisations all over the Reich. No one offered any resistance. It was becoming evident that Hitler did not entirely share the opinion of the leaders of the Free Trades Unions on the subject of collaboration.

By an historic irony, the Trades Unions, who had shown themselves more amenable to the Nazis than had the Social-democrats, were the first to become aware of the lack of a spirit of collaboration on the part of National-Socialism. Leipart and Grassmann, with other leaders of less category, were arrested and thrown into the Plötzensee prison, where they were forced to sing the Horst Wessel song and to shout "Long live Hitler!"

It was then the turn of the Social-democrats. The Hitlerites took possession of all their property—their buildings, printing-works, funds, etc.—and on May 18th they seized the large network of Co-operatives, the pride of German Socialism. The Co-operative leaders had protested against the conduct of those who accused the Hitlerites of committing atrocities, but unfortunately in their case as well Hitler showed no very obvious desire for collaboration.

By now the terror was at its height. Two million Germans were on their way to the concentration camps and prisons. The S.A. hordes at last had a clear field, and Jews, Social-democrats, Communists and Liberals were all at the mercy of the Nazi

butchers. Neither sex nor age was respected. Germany was entering the shadows.

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Once the Left-wing Opposition had been suppressed, Adolf Hitler—master of the art of attacking his enemies one by one—set himself to destroy the Right-wing Parties as well.

The expulsion of the Communist deputies from the Reichstag had increased the Parliamentary strength of National-Socialism. The Nazis, however, did not trouble about the two-thirds majority necessary to reform the Constitution and to proclaim Hitler dictator. The Catholic Centre, easily convinced by the Führer that not only the Party, but also the Church, would prosper in the Third Reich, voted for the law giving Hitler extraordinary powers to reform the Constitution and to legislate by decree for a period of four years.

On June 27th Hitler expelled Alfred Hugenberg from the Government, and the whole of the nation's economy passed into the control of the Nazis. The man who replaced Hugenberg, however, was no revolutionary, but a representative of suicidal capitalism, Dr. Schmidt, Director-General of the Allianz-Versicherung-Gesselschaft.

The terror now threatened the Conservative groups, the Catholics and German Nationalists. These parties found it tremendously difficult to carry on, and their leaders were persecuted by the Nazis just as though they had been ordinary Social-democrats. In the end both organisations were obliged to go into "voluntary" liquidation.

On July 14th, an anniversary dear to all lovers of liberty, Adolf Hitler declared National-Socialism the only legal party in Germany. The Third Reich had begun . . . and with it the world war.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

THE THIRD REICH

OF ALL the promises made to the people by National Socialism, the Party fulfilled only two: the persecution of the Jews and the destruction of the Versailles Treaty. For Adolf Hitler that was the national revolution whose beginnings he had announced on May 1st, 1933.

The only mission of the Third Reich was to drive Germany into war. Once opposition to Nazism was annihilated, the way to rearmament was open.

The Republic and the Parliamentary régime represented formidable obstacles to the creation of that war-machine dreamed of

by Pan-Germanism. Every time that the budget for the construction of the warships authorised by the Treaty of Versailles was discussed in the Reichstag, the Communists attacked it with noisy protests; and by every means in their power, including Parliamentary obstruction, they tried to prevent approval of the Government plans. Neither did the Social-democrats give any facilities for national rearmament. On the contrary, Hermann Müller's Government, as we have seen, reduced the Reichswehr budget by RM.38 million. This furious Marxist opposition to rearmament was more than the Reichswehr, the Nazis, and the Imperialist capitalists, who looked on war as a means of escaping from a situation which they considered insupportable, were ready to put up with. Adolf Hitler saw in it the hand of Satan, the most hideous crime that any politician or organisation could possibly commit. For Hitler the German Republic was the "Republic of Versailles", and the Weimar statesmen were the Novemberverbrecher, the November criminals or bandits. His anti-Marxism was really hatred of internationalism, of pacifism, of social and racial equality. Everything which Hitler repudiated as prejudicial to world domination by Germany, by the Herrenvolk, was represented by the Soviet régime—hence his violent diatribes against the men and system of Moscow.

It would be a mistake, however, to suppose that National-Socialism wanted to save capitalism in order to allow the large industrialists to increase their profits. Temporarily capitalism was to improve its position under Hitler, for the defence of the capitalist régime was a *sine quâ non* in the final Nazi aim of dominating the world. A Socialist Germany would have lacked aggressive capacity, would have destroyed German Imperialism, and the insult of Versailles, the humiliation of the German Army, would have gone for ever unavenged. So much was evident, and the Marxist opposition to rearmament in Parliament and the Government exasperated the Nazis far more than the social laws of Social-democracy, laws which Hitler personally would have approved if they had involved nothing more than a drop in capitalist profits. But these social laws were incompatible with rearmament, which had to be carried out at the expense of the poorer classes.

The victory of National-Socialism could not therefore be a revolution. On May 22nd, 1933, the Führer said in the Reichstag: "In Germany private property is sacred." Hitler was a counter-revolutionary, whose plans for war implied the destruction of Socialism, and on this point he coincided with the industrialists and the Junkers. Over the abolition of Parliament and the extermination of Socialist organisations, Adolf Hitler and all the reactionary classes were in agreement. As far as the question

of war was concerned, however, there was no unanimity. Conservative capitalism, the rich men who had no desire to risk their well-being in military adventures, looked on the anti-Bolshevist Hitler as a saviour, but on the Hitler whose ambition was to become the Generalissimo of the German Army, as an enemy.

Now the point of view of the Hugenbergs was a contradictory one, for if capitalist economy could not work in Germany, the alternative was some kind of Socialism, and systematic opposition to any solution of this kind was forcing Germany to endure a permanent state of civil war, with all the exhaustion and bloodshed attendant on such a conflict. German capitalism, in short, had to commit suicide by blocking the path to a fundamental reform in economy. It could choose its weapons, and it did its best to choose those of civil war, but it takes two to make a quarrel, and Social-democracy did not want to fight. Capitalism therefore decided to commit suicide outside Germany, in a struggle with other nations, preferring this weapon as being more elegant and more glorious. Hitler is undoubtedly a potential suicide, the legitimate representative of certain social classes intent on taking their own lives. And this was realised by a considerable number of large landowners and not a few Reichswehr generals. But the ideal of the traditionalists, which, as I have said, consisted in supporting Hitler until he had destroyed the Republic, and then getting rid of him once the "Bolshevik peril" had passed, was unrealisable. In the end there was a general suicide, of Conservatives and extremists, of those who cared more for their own interests than for wiping out the stain of Versailles, and of those who were ready to sacrifice everything in order to redeem the honour which they felt had been lost in 1919.

In my opinion, the war for National-Socialism was an end in itself. Hitler was more interested in beginning it than in its final outcome. There can be no doubt that he spoke from the heart when he said in 1939 that he preferred to make war when he was fifty than later on when he was old. For any other man and movement the essential factor would have been the military preparation of the Reich. How Germany, without a large fleet, could be victorious in a war against the strongest naval power in the world, must have been a mystery even to Hitler himself. What was fundamentally important to him, however, was to create world chaos, to humiliate the French, to disturb the placid life of the English—in short, to destroy a peace which Germany had not known since 1914. It must not be forgotten that National-Socialism was a movement of desperate and resentful men. One of the undoubted differences between the Germany of Wilhelm II and that of Hitler is that while for the Kaiser and the Conservative

classes and traditionalists which he represented, the war of 1914 was a means, for the Nazis the war of 1939 was an end. "Even if the affair turns out badly", the Nazis and their patrons must have thought, "Germany will be no worse off than she is now." (Such a reflexion could never have been made by the Kaiser or his partisans.) The Nazi theory was that Germany had nothing to lose. For a terrorist movement such as Nazism the risk was worth taking. After all, was not Hitler ready to run similar risks inside Germany if he could not resolve the internal economic problem?

. . . . . .

The new régime had to be given a name, and it was baptised "the Third Reich". Hitler had said, "The first Reich was that of Bismarck, the second that of the Weimar Republic, and the third is myself." Otto Strasser replied to this that according to Möller van den Bruck, author of *The Third Reich*, the First Reich was Charlemagne's Christian and Federal Holy Roman Empire and the second the régime of Wilhelm I and Bismarck. . . . Others held that the first Reich was that of Wilhelm I and Bismarck, the second that of Wilhelm II without Bismarck, and the third that of Hitler. Not even the Nazis could agree, therefore, as to what constituted the first two Reichs.

Whatever the first two may have been, however, it is certain that Adolf Hitler looked on himself as the founder of the third. And this third Empire of the Nazis will go down to history as one of the most devilish and perverse experiments ever carried out by man in the science of government.

It was only natural that at least some of the National-Socialists should believe that the Nazi programme had not been written to deceive the credulous. Not all the members of the Nazi Party were degenerates, homosexuals and rogues, as a large proportion of their leaders were. There were Nazis who in all good faith looked on Adolf Hitler as a champion of social justice. These ignorant and bewildered masses pinned all their hopes on Hitler's advent to power. The Nazi programme was in fact a very tempting one. Among other things it promised the abolition of the Zinsknechtschaft, or the tyranny of Bank interest, which naturally produced in the small bourgeoisie, ground down by the Banks and the usurers, an almost unanimous reaction in favour of National-Socialism. The first problem with which Hitler had to deal after his rise to power was that created by Point 11 of the Nazi programme, which demanded "the suppression of income not proceeding directly from intellectual or manual work, and the complete abolition of the tyranny of interest on capital". Throughout the whole of Germany there arose cases of debtors who refused to repay their loans or pay their interest. The Nazi Ministers in the

provinces were confused and perplexed. A good many people believed that the time had come to carry out the famous 11th Point, and when the creditors asked them to intervene, these officials did not know what to do. The Banks began to protest to the Reich Government against the conduct of certain people who on the due dates were refusing to pay their debts, and who asserted that the Nazi programme was quite definite and explicit on this point. The Government announced that there was no such abolition of interest payments, but the debtors insisted on appealing to the Nazi programme, to which, in fact, Hitler had never given the slightest importance. On August 15th the Ministry of Economy was obliged to make the following declaration: "Various letters from credit institutions have recently shown that in isolated cases debtors have refused to repay the loans advanced to them, or have demanded the cancellation of interest, basing their attitude on a belief that certain laws of the Reich Government"—there was no allusion to the Nazi programme—"are designed to remit or diminish both debts and interest. This attitude has no foundation whatsoever in fact."

Only a few months after the triumph of National-Socialism disillusionment was undermining the discipline of the Party and the faith of many individuals in Adolf Hitler. The latter had proclaimed the beginning of a national revolution, and the national revolution was nowhere to be seen. Radical groups of National-Socialists began to work for a second revolution, and on July 3rd, 1933, Adolf Hitler took his stand against these discontented elements, saying in Reichenhall: "The revolution is over. Woe to him who attempts a second one!"

It would have been somewhat difficult, however, to have attempted a second revolution before the first had taken place.

With the Workers' Trades Unions dissolved, social legislation abolished, and wages reduced to an incredibly low level, the capitalists were now living in the best of all possible worlds. The proletariat were the prisoners of the employers, without the right to strike, without fixed wage schedules or working hours. On May 1st, 1934, the Government dictated a kind of Work Charter, a law *zur Ordnung der Nationalen Arbeit*, the preamble to which reads as follows:

> "The basis of the new Social Constitution is the factory. The management of the factory devolves on the director of the undertaking. He decides all questions concerned with its working. The staff must be loyal to the employer. On such loyalty the community of the factory is based. *As a consequence, all laws of basic importance, such as those of the Factory Councils, collective contracts and tariffs, arbitration and wages, are abolished.*"

Nazism handed over the worker, bound hand and foot, to the capitalist.

Two months earlier, on March 14th, a law was passed entrusting the direction of the whole of German industrial life to twelve captains of heavy industry, among whom were Krupp von Bohlen, Blohm, Rechlin, Erich Hartkopl, Bruno Schüler and Albert Vögler. All the workers were forced to belong to the Arbeitsfront, the Nazi Trades Union, ruled over by Dr. Ley.

These decrees of 1934 did not create any new situation, but merely gave judicial sanction to a state of affairs which had been established by the Nazis immediately on their rise to power, in collaboration with the German nationalists, who on this point were rather naturally in agreement with Hitler.

Since January 30th, 1933, there had been no Factory Councils, collective work contracts, wage schedules, fixed working hours or arbitration. The owner of the factory was lord and master both of the undertaking and of his staff. In Germany a feudal capitalism had been installed.

The drop in wages was enormous. In 1934 the Nazis had not yet begun to falsify business statistics, and thanks to this we are in possession of certain data which show the consequences of the National-Socialist social policy during the first year of the régime, data which are more eloquent than any commentary.

Let us first consider the wages paid in 1932 and 1933 by four large business firms:

Firm.	*Wages paid.* 1932. (In millions of Reichsmark.)	1933.
Gute-Hoffnung-Hütte	38·8	31·1
Hösch	43·6	38·9
Krupp	69·5	67·4
Siemens	55·6	48·2

In 1933 therefore there was a drop of 33·7 per cent. in the wages of these three enterprises as compared with the previous year. Nevertheless the number of workers increased in Krupp's factories by 8,000, in the Hösch works by 1,300, and in Siemens by 4,000. Only in the Gute-Hoffnung-Hütte was there a decrease. This firm in 1932 paid an average weekly wage, including the salaries of the directors and the management staff, of RM.45·87. In 1933, the first year of the Hitler régime, the average was RM.36·92. The firm of Hösch paid an average weekly wage of RM.44·42 in 1932 and of RM.36·82 in 1933, while the Krupp's figures were RM.37·54 and RM.29·86 in 1932 and 1933 respectively. The

weekly wages of the three first firms under review dropped in 1933 by an average of 20 per cent.

Let us now consider the profits of the great industrial firms.

Firm.	*Profit.* 1932.	1933. (In millions of Reichsmark.)	% *Increase.*
Hösch	12·5	23·7	89
Krupp	20·3	35·3	75
Kloeckner	9·2	20·8	125

The Gute-Hoffnung-Hütte, which in 1932 lost RM.7·6 millions, reduced its losses in 1933 to RM.2·7 million. That is to say, while wages decreased by 20 per cent. in the first year of National-Socialism, the profits of the great capitalists increased by 100 per cent.

There can be no doubt that heavy industry was already receiving enormous subsidies from the Government. (Hitler, in fact, merely returned the money which the capitalists advanced him.) This is clearly shown in the balance sheets of the great business enterprises, and only thus can the fact that the profits were not related to production be explained. In 1933, for instance, Hösch manufactured less than during the previous year, and this was only natural, since industry was adapting itself to war production, and some firms took longer than others to carry out their "revolution"—the real Nazi revolution. In spite of this drop in output, however, Hösch increased his profits by RM.11·2 million. This increase cannot be explained by the RM.4·7 million of wage decreases, nor by the perfecting of labour methods. The extra profit is undoubtedly accounted for by Government subsidies. The case of Krupp, however, is even clearer. The value of Krupp's production in 1933 increased by RM.22 million. Salaries dropped by 2·1 million (in spite of the increase of 8,000 workers referred to.) How, therefore, can a rise of RM.15 million in the net profits be explained? The explanation is that Krupp was already manufacturing war material, that is to say, was carrying out the Nazi "revolution", and his profits are accounted for by the fact that there had been a drop in wages, that the State was giving him exceptionally high prices for his war material, and that he was also receiving very large subsidies. (Krupp had belonged to the National-Socialist Party for some years.)

We have now seen what Hitler gave the capitalists. He gave them, in fact, all they desired, everything they had been fighting for since the beginning of the Weimar Coalition. In exchange for this, of course, they were required to give up some of their freedom of movement. But why did the industrialists want freedom if

not to enslave the proletariat, and to destroy everything which might tend to restrict their profits? Such freedom they were now enjoying. The disadvantages of the capitalists in the new régime were neither more nor less than those of the other Germans: there was no law but the Nazi law, and the Nazis were barbarians. All the civil guarantees that the German people had won for themselves during the course of centuries disappeared overnight. In the Third Reich there were neither rights, nor law, nor respect for the individual personality. A capitalist could be sent to a concentration camp in the same way as a worker. But although both shared this common risk, the worker, under Hitler, became a slave, and capitalism gained a firmer control of the nation than it had had during the Republic. The capitalists were, in fact, the only masters of Germany.

The liberal bourgeoisie in other countries mistakenly supposed that Hitler was carrying out a revolution, since German capitalism was controlled by the Nazis. Nazism had representatives on the Boards of the industrial firms and the Banks, and a German Bank could not dispose of its money with the same freedom as its English, American or French prototypes. Now and again news would leak across the German frontiers that the Nazis had seized the property of some wealthy individual and had sent him to a concentration camp. This, thought many members of the democracies, is obviously a revolution. Such an idea, however, was a mistaken one. In the first place it was logical that the State, which had saved the German Banks during the 1931 crisis, should intervene to a certain extent in financial affairs, and this had happened in Germany before Hitler's rise to power. On the other hand, the capitalists of the democracies could not and would not understand that Germany had been at war with Europe from the very moment that Hindenburg placed the power in Hitler's hands. Hitler's one task was to prepare the Reich for war and to give the German Army its marching orders when he felt that the moment had come. The Paris Press wrote on January 30th, 1933: "*C'est la guerre!*", and the Paris Press was right. Now, a Government like Hitler's, which considers its country to be at war, must impose on it a war-time policy and a war-time economy. Thus the concentration of power, the diminution of individual freedom, the control of industry and banking, were merely emergency measures, such as are taken by all Governments as soon as their countries find themselves in a state of war. In Germany the intervention of the State—of Krupp's State, be it remembered, for capitalism could not live without official assistance—was accentuated. But those who looked on the Hitler Government as a Government of peace could only interpret the Nazi dictatorship as a revolution.

The case of Italy under Mussolini was a similar one. A bankrupt capitalism threatened by social revolution saved itself from liquidation and "Bolshevism" by creating a State Bank, whose mission, apart from that of destroying the workers' organisations, consisted in helping insolvent private enterprises with national funds. Both as a man and a business proprietor the " capitalist" had lost, to a certain extent, the liberty which he formerly enjoyed, but "capitalism" itself not only profited by the change, but was, in fact, the sole beneficiary under the dictatorship. The loss of liberty represented the premium which the capitalist paid for the privilege of having his business finances put in order by the State, and protected against the threat of social revolution.

The problem of unemployment had been the nightmare of all German Governments ever since 1929. Hitler "solved" it, however, and on May 1st, 1934, he announced in his Tempelhof speech: "We have given back work to more than three million Germans". There was no way of finding out if Hitler was telling the truth, for the statistics were by now being compiled by Dr. Göbbels' department, but no one doubted that he was anxious to get rid of unemployment. And there were grounds for hope that he would "solve" the problem, since he had at his disposal means which the Republic lacked. Like all dictatorships, National-Socialism put in hand a series of public works, many of them of a military character, which absorbed some of the unemployed. It exempted the new industries from taxation, together with urban property which had been reconstructed, thus encouraging proprietors to develop their enterprises. It sent hundreds of thousands of unemployed to work on the land, the State paying part of their wages, and the farmers the rest. It made it illegal for industrialists to get rid of their staffs, and some managements were forced to take on fresh employees—in such cases reduced wages being authorised by way of compensation. From the capitalists' point of view, of course, this system was an excellent one. Another measure which helped to reduce the number of workless was the expulsion of women from industry, and those unemployed whom Hitler could not place in work had their insurance pay stopped. One fine day they found the doors of the Arbeitsvermittlungen (Labour Exchanges) closed, and were told that if they wanted work they must look for it on the land.

The gigantic rearmament programme, however, was soon to give work to all Germans. Besides this, in the spring of 1935, Adolf Hitler declared that Germany no longer considered herself bound by the terms of the Versailles Treaty, and introduced compulsory military service. The new army of the nation finally absorbed what remained of the army of the unemployed.

Paul von Beneckendorff und Hindenburg, General Field-Marshal, official hero of Tannenberg and President of the German Republic for nine years, died on the morning of August 2nd, 1934. Contrary to what might be supposed, the death of the Reich President did not create any problem for National-Socialism. Once more Adolf Hitler disconcerted his adversaries, this time by appointing himself Reichs-Führer—that is to say, by combining the Presidencies of Government and State. On the day of Hindenburg's death, the officers of the Reichswehr in all the cities of Germany swore loyalty and obedience to the ex-Austrian house-painter. This was not an oath of submission to the head of the State as such, but to the person of Adolf Hitler.

Nothing now could depose Hitler, save a revolution. But after June 30th, 1934 a revolution from below became well-nigh impossible.

The events of June 30th constitute perhaps the most shameful page in the annals of German history. For two days National-Socialism exposed its vices and depravity to the gaze of the world, with a crudity that was humiliating not only to the healthy section of the German nation but also to European dignity.

Conflict within the Nazi Party was inevitable. Adolf Hitler had preached revolution, promising the masses what he never intended to give them, and a year after his arrival at the Chancellery, discontent had spread throughout the country. The proletariat were oppressed, and reduced to a state of slavery which was only maintained by terror. It was not easy, however, to silence that part of National-Socialism which was not in agreement with the reactionary policy of Adolf Hitler, the instrument of Krupp and the Reichswehr. Such radical elements of Nazism were those who wrote to Gregor Strasser asking him to return to active life; who believed that they had more right than the reactionary generals to be heard by the Führer; who studied the Nazi programme and considered that they had been betrayed. The "new" State was not yet established on a solid basis. The Presidential *camarilla* was still intriguing with von Papen. The Nazi leaders were struggling to ensure a future for themselves, quarrelling over the most important positions, at loggerheads with one another. Göring and Himmler were fighting over the control of the Gestapo. Göbbels feared Göring, Himmler mistrusted Röhm, Röhm suspected Göring, and Göring despised Göbbels. The Reichswehr distrusted the Storm Troopers. The Storm Troopers feared the S.S. And Adolf Hitler, who, in common with the industrialists and the Army, needed order for the speedy and uninterrupted prosecution of rearmament, viewed with alarm a state of anarchy which might bring about his own ruin and the failure of his plans for

world domination. He had once again proclaimed his ideal in his Reichenhall speech, when he announced the end of the revolution. "We need internal order so that we may develop externally", he had said. This order would naturally be impossible so long as the Nazi Party was undermined by discontent. From every side Hitler was besieged with suggestions and advice, and encouragement against the Party agitators and disturbers of the peace. The Reichswehr demanded that an end should be put to such a state of affairs. Papen, in the name of the industrialists and the Junkers, made a violent speech in Marburg on June 17th, 1934, in which he denounced the fanatical *doctrinaires*, those who incited anarchy, and those who wanted to keep Germany in a state of permanent insurrection. Mussolini had also advised Hitler, in the Venice meetings of June 14th and 15th, to pursue a policy of iron, the same policy which a few months earlier he had recommended to Dollfuss and Starhemberg for Austria. For Mussolini, then at the zenith of his political power in Europe, was the highest authority in the art of ruling by terror, and Hitler was as yet not firmly seated in the saddle of government.

The front of the Junkers, the Reichswehr, the great industrialists and the reactionary Nazis, against the radicals of the movement, was finally formed by June 20th, and was ready to attack.

The S.A., who at the time consisted of two or three million turbulent Brownshirts, had been very busy during the first year of the Nazi régime. But the general wave of terror had passed, the concentration camps were full, and the S.A. had no longer any definite task to perform. Besides this, the S.S. (Schutzstaffel), the Führer's Pretorian guard, consisted of 300,000 men, who, with the police, the Gestapo, and the Reichswehr, were sufficient to defend Hitler's order. The S.A., therefore, no longer had any *raison d'être*, now that the terror was organised and Hitler could rely on the Reichswehr, at the head of which, as Minister for War, was his admirer von Blomberg. It was thus necessary to disband the Storm Troopers, who, it should be added, were ungovernable elements, the proletariat of the troops. Röhm, however, the S.A. Chief of Staff, thought differently. At a Council of Ministers he had proposed the incorporation of the Storm Troopers in the Reichswehr, in order to create a great national army, with himself at the head. The leaders of the militia were to join this great army, retaining their rank. Von Blomberg and von Fritsch, the Commander-in-Chief of the Reichswehr, were of the opinion that this incorporation of the Nazi troops in the Army would bring about the destruction of the latter, and Röhm was bold enough to attack the generals, who, with the reactionary ministers—Göring

and Himmler, leader of the S.S.—the industrialists and the Junkers, all urged Hitler to disband the S.A.

The economic situation of the Reich could not have been worse. On Hitler's advent to power Germany's export trade had practically disappeared. Industrial production was almost up to the 1929 level, but it consisted for the most part of war material, and the German people, who were now working harder, were having to eat less. The Government had raised tariffs, and had reduced the importation of foodstuffs, in order to be able to acquire the necessary material for rearmament. Germany for the first time for many years was showing a deficit in her commercial balance. Everything combined to keep the nation in a permanent state of anxiety, protest and nervousness.

Hitler was obliged to attack. He had to carry the terror to the one group which up to then had remained untouched, his own Party.

The Reichswehr demanded the dissolution of the S.A. by the month of July. It was then announced that in the early days of July the Storm Troopers would be disbanded for two months, during which time they would not be allowed to wear their uniforms. This measure caused inevitable disgust among the band of terrorist soldiery, who had rendered such excellent services to the Party and to Hitler. There are no proofs, however, that Röhm and the other S.A. leaders made any attempt to resist the order.

The Reichswehr foresaw a conflict with the Brownshirts, and for some weeks they were taking precautions. Such a situation could not long continue.

Adolf Hitler decided to act, and organised the repression in concert with Göring and Himmler. Göring was given instructions concerning the general plan of the terror in Berlin, instructions which the Prussian Minister of the Interior later confessed that he exceeded.

Hitler left by 'plane for Southern Germany on the night of June 29th, accompanied by Göbbels, and at four o'clock on the morning of June 30th they arrived in Munich. The previous evening Hitler, from Berlin, had telephoned Wagner, the Munich Gauleiter, to take measures against the S.A. leaders in the Bavarian capital. And when he arrived at the Ministry of the Interior, a Shakespearian tragedy had already been enacted. Various S.A. leaders were lying dead, among others Schneihuber, Schmidt and Du Moulin, men who a few hours before were talking and drinking with their assassin hosts. An air-pilot named Udet managed to escape, and later regained Hitler's favour, for he is now one of the leaders of the Luftwaffe.

As soon as Hitler learned the result of the first stage of the purge, he drove off by car, accompanied by his guard of gangsters, to Wiessee, a picturesque resort, about 20 miles from Munich, where Ernst Röhm and other leaders of the Storm Troopers were spending their holidays, and waiting for a meeting on the following day which the Führer was to attend. Hitler and his friends knocked on the Chief of Staff's door at six o'clock in the morning of the 30th. This was the day, according to a statement made by Hitler in a subsequent speech at the Kroll Opera, fixed for a rising of the Brownshirts, but in spite of this the holiday-makers were still sleeping soundly in their beds at the Wiessee inn when the S.S. men arrived. Röhm's arrest was carried out personally by Adolf Hitler, the Chancellor of the Reich, pistol in hand. The official version of the incident states that Röhm surrendered without opposition, while others say that he and Hitler remained for a few moments alone together, engaged in a heated discussion.

In a room on the other side of the corridor, the Hitler Guard found Edmund Heines, one of the most sinister members of National-Socialism, who had boasted of having killed a Republican. Heines at the time was with a young homosexual, apparently his chauffeur, and both were murdered together in the same bed.

Having arrested Röhm and his adjutant Uhl, Hitler and the S.S. men returned to Munich. On the way they met S.A. leaders who were driving to Röhm's house, no doubt to assist at the meeting convened by Hitler to determine the future of the organisation. These men were ordered to return at once to the city.

In Munich Rudolf Hess had seized the Brown House without any opposition, and had replaced the S.A. guard by S.S. men.

The Storm Troopers arrested in Wiessee—including the S.A. leaders Heydebrech, Wilhelm Hayn and Fritz von Krausser—were taken to the Stadtheim Prison, where they were put against a wall and shot. Röhm was thrown into a cell and given a revolver with which to blow out his brains. But this Storm Troops organiser, the man who had obtained the original funds for National-Socialism, said that he preferred to be killed by Hitler or his deputy. Tired of waiting for him to commit suicide, the S.S. men finally murdered him at five o'clock on the afternoon of July 1st. Thus perished Hitler's best friend.

In the meantime Göring and Himmler were paying off old scores and quenching their thirst for blood in the Berlin terror. Catholic leaders, generals, ex-Ministers, clergy, former enemies of the Nazis who no longer had any influence in German politics, all fell before the bullets of the S.S.

On June 30th the Gestapo arrested in Bremen the Berlin leader of the S.A., Karl Ernst, Röhm's favourite, and brought him by 'plane to the capital, where he was shot in the former Cadet School of Gross-Lichterfeld, with his adjutants, Sanders and Kirschbaum. Ernst was just going on his honeymoon to the Azores, and already had his cabin reserved.

These and other leaders of the S.A. died shouting, "Heil Hitler!" They no doubt imagined that their executioners were the rebels, who had risen up against the Führer. And this was not the only detail which makes it seem improbable that the S.A. was really plotting against Hitler, or that, as the military suggested, Ernst was planning to oppose the disbanding order and to occupy Berlin with his troops.

In Berlin the Catholics suffered tremendous casualties. Brüning escaped with his life through the lucky chance of being in the country at the time. Treviranus, an ex-Minister of the Brüning Government, succeeded in flouting the S.S. persecution in a series of adventures worthy of a Hollywood film. Von Papen managed to save himself as usual—this time thanks to his influence with the Hindenburgs, and perhaps because the Nazis, feeling that a man so completely lacking in scrúples was essential to a régime which had so many disagreeable tasks to perform, decided to retain his services.

Dr. Erich Klausener, leader of Catholic Action, Adalbert Probst, leader of the Catholic Youth movement, Fritz von Bose, chief of Papen's office, and Dr. Edgar Jung, Papen's private secretary and right-hand man, were, however, all murdered at their desks.

Von Kahr, Premier of the Bavarian Government in 1923, whose former betrayal Göring and Himmler had never forgiven, was also caught in the web of the Gestapo. In spite of his sixty-three years, he was taken away to the concentration camp of Dachau, where he died after suffering the usual Nazi tortures.

Gregor Strasser was lunching with his family when the Gestapo agents arrested him, and was shot in a cell of the Prinz Albrecht-strasse Prison.

In this shameful massacre Father Stampfle, the priest who corrected and put the finishing touches to *Mein Kampf*, also perished. And among the Army men, General Schleicher and Bredow were killed, the latter on the threshold of his house.

The circumstances surrounding the death of Kurt von Schleicher, who was murdered in his house at Zehlendorff, show how far the victims were from suspecting the fate which awaited them. Up to now historians have not agreed as to whether Schleicher was writing letters, speaking on the telephone, or reading the paper,

when surprised by Himmler's envoys. It is known, however, that Frau von Schleicher rushed in at the sound of the pistol shots, and was herself killed instantly.

On July 13th, twelve days later, Adolf Hitler decided to give the nation an account of this German St. Bartholomew's Day. In the Kroll Opera, which was being used by the Nazis as their Parliament, the hysterical Chancellor gave the number of victims as seventy-seven. The real figure, however, was over 1,000. In Munich alone 120 people were killed at the hands of the S.S., among others Dr. Willi Schmidt, music critic on the *Münchener Neueste Nachrichten*, a man of culture and completely removed from politics, who was murdered in mistake for an S.A. leader of the same name. The Nazis, however, soon put the matter to rights by shooting his namesake as well.

Hitler tried, though unsuccessfully, to justify the terror which had been unleashed by him and his collaborators. He accused the S.A. leaders and the generals of plotting against him, and of being in the service of a foreign Power. On June 29th, he said, he received news of such gravity that he decided to take action without a moment's delay. The Chancellor could bring no proofs, however, of the existence of any conspiracy against his person or the Reichswehr. The truth was that throughout the whole of Germany the atmosphere was electric, and sooner or later the storm had to break. In the end, neither the Chancellor nor the Reichswehr could wait any longer, and they let loose the terror. A man of action, Hitler got the start of his enemies, as he has always done.

Thus was the S.A. disbanded—at the point of the pistol—and the S.S. and the Reichswehr remained masters of the situation.

Dr. Göbbels made every possible use of his propaganda facilities in order to focus attention on the scene in Heines' bedroom, hoping in this way to justify the massacre as a moral action. Röhm, Heines and other Nazi leaders were certainly homosexuals, but there is no doubt that there were also many perverts among their executioners.

The real cause of these events—principally the disillusionment of the radical Nazis when they saw that Hitler was surrendering to the capitalists—could not, of course, escape the attention of Göbbels. In order to stir up the feelings of the masses against Röhm and his supporters, therefore, Nazi propaganda gave them the name of "reactionary rebels". This was a way of representing the victims as enemies of the revolution and of making their memory hated by the people.

Outside Germany the meaning of the June massacres was by no means completely understood. Neither the moral corruption

of National-Socialism, which had been exposed in all its repugnance, nor the victory of Krupp and the Reichswehr, alarmed Europe. The diplomats and Governments of the democracies, with rare exceptions such as Ambassador Dodd, saw in the Nazi régime a great barrier against Bolshevism, the last stronghold of private property. They looked on Hitler the terrorist as a policeman, on Göring the incendiary as a man of law and order, on those who had seized the goods of the workers' organisations as defenders of private property. This morbid interpretation of Nazism soon gained the support of the Conservative classes in Europe.

Germany was thus being helped by her future victims to return to her status as a great military Power. It was not the first time in history that this had occurred, but it gave no less cause for alarm to good patriots on that account that there should be so many influential people in the democracies, virtual masters of the State, who were ready to work for the ruin of their respective countries if by so doing they could humiliate and destroy their political adversaries.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

. . . AND THE SECOND WORLD WAR

" But when a war of annihilation is surely, though in point of time indefinitely, impending over a weaker State, the wiser, more resolute, and more devoted men—who would immediately prepare for the unavoidable struggle, accept it at a favourable moment, and thus cover their defensive policy by offensive tactics—always find themselves hampered by the indolent and cowardly mass of the money-worshippers, of the aged and feeble, and of the thoughtless who wish merely to gain time, to live and die in peace, and to postpone at any price the final struggle. So there was in Carthage a party for peace and a party for war, both, as was natural, associating themselves with the political distinction which already existed between the conservatives and the reformers."—Mommsen, *History of Rome*, Book III, Chap. IV).

IF THE economic situation of the Reich is considered it will at once be seen how enormous were the obstacles Germany was to encounter in her task of constructing a war-machine with which to defy the "Versailles Powers". But the facilities for this gigantic rearmament programme which Hitler was to be given in the economic, political and diplomatic spheres largely compensated these difficulties. The Führer himself could never have suspected the extent to which the democracies would collaborate with him in the maturing of his military plans against them.

No one knew better than Hitler the secret of his triumph in Germany. Anti-Bolshevism had been the "Open Sesame" to all

the gates of power. And when he wanted to become dictator, all he had to do was to accuse the Communists of setting fire to the Reichstag, and his ambition was achieved.

The European bourgeoisie, who had witnessed the revolutions of the post-war period, were suffering from a strange disease to which we will give the name of "retrospective fears". Disturbed at the danger which had threatened private property during the years 1918–20, they imagined that they could see the fearful spectre of Communism on every hand. The ultra-Conservatives lived in a state of perpetual anxiety. Like all people who are dominated by fear, they lost all power of thought, and as a social class they suffered from frightful hallucinations. And European reaction longed for the day of revenge, the day when it could renew the fight against the Soviet Union.

These tormented creatures ended by accusing everyone who was not a militant anti-Communist of Bolshevism. In the democracies all reformist politicians, or those who had no particular use for Mussolini, ran the risk of failing in their careers.

The subversion of values which this anti-Bolshevist mania of the Conservative classes necessarily produced in society, was in itself a demoralising factor. Essential reactionaries like Brüning were violently flung from power on the accusation of wanting to introduce Bolshevism. An absurd and grotesque situation had been reached: the Socialist Parties became Liberals, the Liberals Conservatives, and many Conservatives Fascists. And this occurred in socially balanced countries, with a strong middle class, such as Britain and France, where there was no possibility of a revolution unless the Governments themselves provoked it out of sheer masochism.

Tragedy was fast overtaking Europe, for the hallucinations of the reactionaries were the result of fear, which in both life and history is responsible for so many catastrophes; the wealthy classes' pathological fear of Bolshevism, and the fear of the Socialists and democrats that the Conservatives would take them for Bolsheviks, had turned politics into a tragi-comedy. It was the time when a mythical letter from Zinoviev could ruin a whole Party.

The bourgeoisie, no longer capable of producing anything new, of reforming themselves, of creating values, were suffering from senile decay and were as frightened of phantoms as any old woman.

The times were propitious for the bold, however, and any adventurer with political intuition and personal drive could go far.

The ultra-reactionaries longed for order, for the Kantian perpetual peace as applied to the nation. They had no desire to

fight, but they wanted to destroy the workers' organisations and to fling into concentration camps all those whom they considered revolutionaries—all those, in fact, who were not Fascists. And if they would not fight themselves, someone had to fight for them. Thus arose the modern "tyrannis", with its plebeian cohort of gangsters in black, brown and blue shirts.

The anti-Bolshevism of Hitler and Mussolini—both of whom a few years before had worked as bricklayers—had earned for them the homage of the Conservatives and the respect of the blue-blooded aristocracy throughout the world.

For two years Germany was arming, not secretly but in the sight of all, and the Governments of the democracies, like Nelson, turned a blind eye to the signal.

On March 1st, 1935, Hermann Göring, now a self-appointed general, announced that Germany was in possession of a magnificent air-force.

The democracies had barely recovered from their surprise when, on the 16th of the same month, Hitler decreed compulsory military service and tore up the Treaty of Versailles.

The British Foreign Minister, Sir John Simon, together with Mr. Anthony Eden, paid a visit to the Führer in Berlin a few days later, when they were informed that Germany was already in possession of a stronger air-force than the British Empire. Simon and Eden were stupefied. Eden continued his journey to Moscow to hold conversations with Stalin, whom, incidentally, the volume of German rearmament had not surprised. This visit brought about a *rapprochement* between Great Britain and the Soviet Union, but those forming the "Peace Party" in Great Britain, the ultra-Conservatives, did not sympathise with the visit, still less with the official declaration that there was "at present no conflict of interests between the British and Soviet Governments".

French alarm translated itself into the Franco-Soviet Pact of mutual assistance, negotiated by Laval in Moscow. But France had her ultra-Conservatives as well, and Laval and his Prime Minister Flandin were two of them. The value of the document signed in Moscow was therefore a very relative one, like that of the Anglo-Soviet *rapprochement*.

France continued to take precautions—such precautions as could be taken by a Laval—and asked for assistance in the event of the German Army advancing towards the Rhine. Ramsay MacDonald and Simon, Flandin and Laval, and Mussolini—who was already preparing his first act of aggression—decided to denounce Germany's lack of respect for the Treaties. The League of Nations thereupon agreed to appoint a Committee to consider measures "against those who imperil the peace of Europe".

All the countries represented at Stresa voted the condemnation of Germany in Geneva, including Great Britain, who, at the time of the protest against Hitler's attack on the Versailles Treaty, was negotiating the Naval Agreement published a few days later, by virtue of which the Reich was authorised to build a Navy with a tonnage equivalent to 35 per cent. of the British Fleet.

A serious aspect of these negotiations was that Great Britain kept France in complete ignorance of them.

Mussolini had joined the Stresa front with the idea of obtaining from Great Britain and France consent for his long-planned conquest of Abyssinia. Laval was in sympathy with the project; Sir John Simon kept his peace.

In October 1935 the Italian Army began the campaign against the Empire of the Negus. Great Britain seemed disposed not to tolerate aggression; France, however, held back. Sanctions were approved, but Sir Samuel Hoare agreed with Laval that an armed conflict was to be avoided at all costs. While Sir Samuel was firmly denouncing the conduct of Italy, both he and Laval were preparing a plan for the carving-up of Ethiopia, half of which was to be given to Mussolini.

The failure of Anglo-French policy over the Abyssinian question represented a resounding victory for international terrorism. There was no longer any law in Europe save the law of the jungle, and from now onwards aggression was to follow aggression, without interruption, until the world finally burst into flames.

On March 7th, 1936, the German Army occupied the demilitarised zone of the Rhine. France had been responsible for the failure of the policy of sanctions against Italy; now it was Great Britain's turn, and she prevented France from taking action on Germany's destruction of the Locarno Treaty. Hitler himself never expected that the democracies would do no more than shrug their shoulders at the Rhineland *coup*. And the Commander-in-Chief of the Reichswehr, General von Fritsch, was of the opinion, before March 7th, that the adventure would have serious repercussions for the Reich.

In May 1936 Mussolini conquered the last piece of Abyssinian territory. The prestige of the dictators could not have been higher, nor the humiliation of the democracies more profound.

Two months later Hitler and Mussolini, who had already agreed between them to exploit the passive complicity of their democratic admirers, began their aggression against the Spanish Republic, taking advantage of a rebellion of Spanish Army men and Fascists led by General Francisco Franco Bahamonde, who thus acquired the doubtful honour of becoming the first European Quisling.

The anti-Bolshevik card brought Adolf Hitler greater success than he could ever have dreamed of, and he decided to play it for all it was worth. The politician who had most clearly realised the advantage of disguising Nazi neo-Pan-Germanism in the trappings of anti-Communism was undoubtedly Joachim von Ribbentropp, Hitler's private adviser on foreign affairs. Ribbentropp had been a commercial traveller for a German firm of champagne exporters, when he had acquired a fairly extensive knowledge of Europe and of various foreign languages. It was his linguistic ability and optimism which gained him his popularity with Hitler, whom he never attempted to restrain in the way the others did. Closely connected with the wealthy families of Germany through his marriage with Anna Henkel, the daughter of one of the richest champagne-producers in the country, Ribbentropp, as has already been said, was the man who had placed Hitler and Papen in contact with the Rhineland banker, Schröder, in January 1930. The real Nazi Foreign Minister was not, in fact, von Neurath, who retained his post merely on account of his well-known pro-British sentiments, but the former champagne dealer. Of a cold and dispassionate aspect, Ribbentropp was by nature malevolent and a man of extremes. A bad psychologist, he was necessarily a bad diplomat, but there can be no doubt that he was behind the most important decisions of Nazi foreign policy, and was responsible for the successes as well as the mistakes of Hitler's diplomacy.

Hitler always feared a war with Great Britain—hence his attempt to win over London to his plan of dominating Europe. His formula was: "The land for us, the seas for England," an aspiration, however, which conflicted with the traditional policy of Great Britain, and was entirely contrary to British interests. Hitler, who attached far more importance to the racial question than the English did, felt that it would not be impossible to come to some arrangement with London concerning a division of the world between the Germans and the Anglo-Saxons. The manifestations of sympathy which constantly reached him from British Germanophiles, who were closely connected with the anti-Bolsheviks and the partisans of peace at any price, fostered the Führer's hope of winning over Great Britain to his plan for annihilating France.

While von Neurath remained in the Wilhelmstrasse as proof to the British of Hitler's friendly feelings towards them, Joachim von Ribbentropp proceeded to London as German Ambassador and personal envoy of the Führer, with the task of hastening an Anglo-German *rapprochement*. But Ribbentropp was, as we have said, a disastrous diplomat. Shortly after his installation in the

Embassy, he committed the grave mistake of launching a violent diatribe against Bolshevism, a declaration which created a bad effect in official circles and disgusted the people as a whole. Ribbentropp obviously did not know the English.

In spite of this, however, the "Peace Party" in Britain was so strong that the German Ambassador was cajoled, flattered and privately fêted in London to a greater extent that any foreign diplomat had been for years. Lacking contacts with the British working and middle classes, surrounded by appeasers and reactionaries who showed signs of more or less sincere emotion when confronted with a portrait of Adolf Hitler, Ribbentropp arrived with deplorable speed at the conclusion, which he repeatedly communicated to Hitler, that Great Britain was decadent and would in no circumstances go to war. Germany would have fought, however, even in the knowledge that Great Britain would do the same, for as German capitalism was in a blind alley, and a desperate nationalism in power, she had no option but to commit suicide.

The chief obstacle to any Anglo-German understanding lay in Hitler's policy *vis-à-vis* France. Hitler wanted Great Britain on his side in a war against Europe, and in exchange for protecting the Continent against Bolshevism he asked Great Britain to abandon her French ally. The request was an absurd one, but the German Government had a certain justification for its illusions, since what Hitler wanted to do throughout Europe he was already doing in Spain without awakening any protests on the part of the British Government.

The Führer and Ribbentropp must have thought, quite logically, that if German aggression could be represented as a crusade against Communism, Great Britain would offer no opposition to a German conquest of Europe.

This was the origin of the Anti-Comintern Pact signed by the Berlin–Rome Axis—in reality a military alliance between Italy and Germany subsequently adhered to by Japan and other countries. The plan bore the unmistakable stamp of the champagne-dealer, who was now a traveller in anti-Bolshevism. A military alliance between Italy, Germany and Japan would have alarmed Britain, France and the United States in 1914, but in 1937 it was covered with an anti-Communist mantle and therefore held no fears for the ultra-Conservatives of the democracies.

Why, however, did Great Britain not sign the Anti-Comintern Pact? Ribbentropp knew the strength of anti-Bolshevism in London, although he exaggerated it, and, doubtless in the hope that sooner or later Britain would join in the game, he proclaimed *urbi et orbi* that the Pact was there to be signed by anyone who

might wish to do so in the future. But Great Britain, although in agreement with anti-Communism, refused to form an open anti-Communist front, just as she had refused to do more than give her tacit approval to the Holy Alliance of 1815.

Hitler hoped that Great Britain would give him a free hand in Europe, whereas Great Britain was ready to give him a free hand in the East. The ideal of the British ultra-Conservatives was a Four-Power Pact, another Stresa Conference, with Germany included.

In the autumn of 1937 Lord Halifax visited Hitler, and it was announced that the British diplomat had gone to Germany to "explain to Herr Hitler the desire of the British Government for the swift completion of a new Western Pact, as a guarantee of the security and *status quo* in that part of Europe".

The East was free for Hitler. Germany, however, as Hitler had written in *Mein Kampf*, had no intention of launching any important military campaign without first destroying France. Even the anti-Bolshevism of Hitler and Ribbentropp was not sufficient to induce them to make war on the Soviet Union merely for the sake of the ultra-Conservatives of Paris and London. For Hitler, Germany's Public Enemy No. 1 was France.

Joachim von Ribbentropp failed in London to win over Great Britain to an alliance with the Reich—Hitler's supreme objective—and returned to Germany enraged against the English. Neither in 1937 nor 1938, however, did Great Britain show any signs that the time would ever come when she would stand up to the aggressors.

Hitler continued to play the anti-Bolshevik card. In March 1938 German troops entered Vienna.

In September and October Czechoslovakia capitulated, as a result of the Munich Pact, for once the military defences of the Republic fell into Hitler's hands, Prague was at the mercy of the aggressor.

In March 1939 the Spanish Republic was finally conquered by Hitler and Mussolini, after an epic resistance which had lasted two and a half years. The military position of the Berlin–Rome Axis in Europe was by now very strong, and when Hitler learned of the entry of the Italians and Germans in Barcelona he decided—as he himself has acknowledged—to occupy Prague. On March 15th the German Army marched into the Czech capital.

Germany thereupon annexed Memel, and this was followed by a Göbbels-conducted propaganda campaign against Poland.

Up to now Ribbentropp had been right; Great Britain had not declared war. But even British patience has its limits. The "Peace Party" of Great Britain had, in the person of Neville

Chamberlain, withstood terrible insults. Hitler had deceived Chamberlain, as he had deceived all those who trusted in his word of honour, when he tore up the Munich agreement, an agreement in which the British ultra-Conservatives had pledged their political future, for it was, after all, the Four-Power Pact of their dreams. As on each occasion when he has been given what he asked, Hitler stated after Munich that he was satisfied, and the appeasers believed him. According to them a new era was opening for Europe. The occupation of Prague was something of a shock to Mr. Chamberlain; Hitler had not only destroyed Czechoslovakia, but had also made it very difficult for the British Conservatives to face public opinion in their country. The "Peace Party" had staked the whole of its political stakes on the Munich card, and had lost. And Great Britain was at last going to fight . . . for Poland. The East was now closed to Hitler. But the Nazis, who had so often been privately told to "go East", could not understand why a nation like Great Britain, which had never moved a finger to save Spain, should go to war when the German Army was marching towards Russia. Ribbentropp believed that Great Britain was decadent, and the truth was that she was fundamentally sound. There were still values for which the British people, and a large section of the ruling classes, were ready to fight.

In February 1938, Joachim von Ribbentropp had replaced von Neurath as Foreign Minister of the Reich. Dr. Hjalmar Schacht, the German wizard of finance, who in 1934 had taken Dr. Schmidt's place in the Ministry of Economy, and who had been responsible for obtaining British financial assistance for German rearmament, had gone the way of von Neurath. Baron von Fritsch (the General in charge of the Army), General von Blomberg (the latter for private reasons), and a dozen other generals, had also fallen into disgrace. All the politicians and Army men who counselled caution to Hitler forfeited his confidence. They had so often told the Führer that the democracies would not tolerate any further aggression, and they had so often been wrong and Ribbentropp right, that Hitler ended by considering their services redundant.

The German attack on Poland at the beginning of September 1939 was the official commencement of the second world war. This time Great Britain had given her word to fight in the defence of Poland, and she kept it.

A week earlier one of the strangest events in the whole of the disturbing history of Europe during the past 20 years had taken place. Joachim von Ribbentropp, the traveller in anti-Bolshevism, chartered a plane, flew to Moscow, and signed with Molotov

on August 25th a Russo-German Pact of Non-Aggression. The whole affair was over in a few hours, and created universal astonishment. Stalin, who was well aware of the frequency with which Hitler had been told during the past months: "The East is free", burst into peals of Rabelaisian laughter. It was another scene worthy of the pen of Aristophanes.

During the period of German inflation there was, as everyone knows, considerable speculation in the mark. In every country there were people who bought marks in the hope of making a fortune when the price rose. The "holder of marks" was one of the most typical figures of the post-war period. These misguided financiers wanted to deceive Germany, and some of them accumulated so many German notes that even if they had sold them by weight they would still have made something out of the value of the paper. But instead of their deceiving Germany, Germany deceived them, whereupon they protested loudly, and even went so far as to form an international organisation, in the belief that unity is strength. They bitterly bewailed the trick which the Reich had played on them, quite forgetful of the trick which they themselves had tried to play on the Reich.

This picturesque episode o fthe German mark has a certain analogy with the episode of anti-Bolshevism. Those who purchased the anti-Bolshevik marks which Hitler, with the help of his commercial traveller Ribbentropp, was giving in exchange for ready money, for the surrender of vital strategic positions, for raw materials for German rearmament, etc., thought that they were doing excellent business. Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini, those pillars of civilisation and private property, had been entrusted with the historic mission—so the holders of anti-Bolshevik marks believed—of destroying the Soviet Union and the Comintern. But just when the ultra-Conservatives, appeasers and other speculators in the political Stock Exchange felt that the German march to the East was assured, Hitler was negotiating the Non-Aggression Pact with Stalin. Many high officers of the French and other armies had grown accustomed to the idea of a campaign against Russia, and were neither spiritually nor mentally prepared to resist the German attack against the Low Countries, against Belgium and against France. The holders of anti-Bolshevik marks wanted to deceive Hitler into attacking the Soviet Union, so that the Russians and Germans should "cancel each other out" in fierce and savage warfare, while the democracies, free from the social peril of the Communists and the military peril of the Nazis, should be able to return to their old life, and enjoy their holidays and long week-ends in the comfort and freedom from anxiety which were their birthright.

These holders of anti-Bolshevik marks were the most unhappy people in the world on the day that Ribbentropp and Molotov signed the disturbing Pact beneath the sardonic and smiling gaze of Joseph Stalin. Their marks were now an embarrassment to them, and they were as indignant with Hitler as the holders of those other marks had been with Germany nearly twenty years earlier.

What was the meaning of the Russo-German Pact? Whatever may have been the attitude of Great Britain and France to the German attack on Poland, Hitler did not want war with Russia in September 1939. Three factors, all weighty ones, decided the Führer to avoid a conflict with the Soviet Union. The first was the necessity of avoiding a war on two fronts, for the Nazis and the Wehrmacht (the German land, sea and air forces) were obsessed with the idea of invading France, and after the occupation of Poland, France's old ally, the German army had to turn towards the West; the second was the opposition of the Reichswehr to a clash with the Red Army, which was dreaded by all the most intelligent of the professional military men; and the third, and not the least important, was connected with the internal situation of Germany.

The dynamism of Nazi policy has its origin in the fact that the Hitler régime would not and could not solve the internal problem. The discontent of the masses was increasing with the privations which rearmament had brought in its train. But rearmament, in its turn, was imposed on the Nazi régime partly because of the discontent of the masses. It was a vicious circle; the greater the rearmament the greater the misery, and the greater the misery the greater the need to rearm speedily in order to begin foreign adventures. The German boiler was working at dangerous pressure. By suppressing all attempts at revolution, Hitler had shut down the safety valves, and there was every prospect of an explosion. The dynamism of the masses, eager for adventures, had to have some vent, and war in Europe thus became inevitable. Hitler's immediate social need was not so much to seize any particular country as to keep his own nation in a state of constant movement. This psychological aspect of the German problem escaped the attention of the leaders of the democracies, who could never understand that however much they conceded, Hitler would go on demanding.

Mussolini was able to stay in power longer than Hitler without any need for foreign adventures, chiefly because Italian economy was not so bankrupt as German. If Mussolini had fallen in 1928, Italy would have gone over to the Anglo-French orbit.

But Italian Fascism remained in power, and exceeded its mission, which was that of saving Italy from the chaos of 1918–22, and it could not then abandon the government without being called to account by the nation for its crimes. And when a prolongation of the régime could no longer be reasonably justified, Mussolini gave it a justification *a posteriori:* the resurrection of the Roman Empire. Italian Fascism, like its German prototype, had to keep the people in a state of movement. As late as the Stresa Conference, Mussolini was able to march side by side with the democracies. By that time, however, the power of Italian Fascism was waning, and Mussolini was planning his first serious aggression. He was obliged to ally himself with Hitler, even at the risk of turning Italy into a vassal state of Germany, because his need for adventures necessarily clashed with the interests of Great Britain and France. Italian Fascism was in the same difficult situation as German National-Socialism: they were both like wheels rolling downhill which must fall over as soon as they come to a stop. Their counter-revolutionary character deprived them of the stability which popular support would have afforded them, and it was only their dynamic quality which preserved their balance.

In my opinion, this Nazi-Fascist dynamism partly explains the Russo-German Pact of August 1939. As we have already seen, there were at least two other reasons for this Agreement.

For the Reichswehr, the great industrialists and the Junkers, as well as for Hitler, Enemy No. 1 was France. The invasion of that country was, besides, the only campaign which could unite the German people. There would be few Germans, whatever their political ideas, who after the humiliation of 1918 would not rejoice to see the German flag flying over Paris. From all points of view, therefore, France, and not Russia, was indicated as the first objective of the Nazi war. Whether Great Britain fought or not, no obstacle or threat would be sufficient to restrain Hitler from his design of humiliating France. Nazism and the Reichswehr would have gone Bolshevik if this would have guaranteed them the military—and political—victory which they finally obtained in June 1940, with the repetition of the famous armistice of Compiègne in the railway compartment. If Hitler had lost his life after taking part in that episode, he would have died happy.

If the German régime had been the guardian of private property, the barrier against Bolshevism, which the ultra-Conservatives throughout the world considered it to be, it would have had no interest in the West. Hitler would first have attacked Poland, in defence of which, before Munich, neither France nor Great Britain would have lifted a finger, and would at once have marched against Russia—to the delirious joy of the holders of the anti-

Bolshevik marks, who in the summer of 1939 still wielded the greatest political influence in the world.

An invasion of Russia in 1939 would, however, have been unpopular in Germany. Hitler could not have achieved it without clashing with his generals and dividing the German people more than they were already divided. Hence the Russo-German Pact.

The French defeat of June 1940 in effect united the German nation. If Hitler—who would not have received more than 30 to 35 per cent. of the votes of the March 1933 elections if these had not been held in terrorist conditions—had gone to the polls then, Germany would have proclaimed him a national hero almost to a man.

Italy was already in the war on the side of the Reich. Great Britain had begun to fight, however, and the United States, though divided, was supporting her.

Hitler had conquered France, and the French ultra-reactionaries were collaborating with him in the humiliation of their country.

Throughout the summer of 1940 Germany was waiting for the British "Peace Party" to regain its influence in the nation. But the appeasers had been offended by Hitler's betrayal when he tore up the Munich Pact, and many of them were by now, for personal reasons, as hostile to him as the British people themselves. Mr. Neville Chamberlain doubtless died in the belief that Hitler was a sinister figure. Neither Hitler nor Ribbentropp, however, had lost hope that Great Britain, seeing the whole of Europe at the mercy of the Nazis, would negotiate a peace. Germans have never understood the British mentality.

Germany could certainly not defeat Great Britain in the field; a German victory would have to be a political one. Hitler had begun the war without naval power, while the British possessed the largest fleet in the world. As long as Britain remained mistress of the seas, she was invincible. The Nazis, however, pinned a certain faith in submarine warfare and a great deal in the Luftwaffe. For some months, in fact, during the year 1940–41, the volume of tonnage sunk by the Germans gave the London Government cause for uneasiness. But the blockade was a slow-moving weapon, and the arsenals of the British Empire were not idle in the meantime.

During the autumn of 1940 and winter of 1940–41, Germany launched a terrific air offensive on Great Britain. The Nazis had excessive faith in the demoralising effects of the terror, the same terror which had been responsible for the great German and Italian victories in Spain and Poland. But neither Spain nor Poland had been able to counter the Luftwaffe with an air-force

sufficiently large to destroy the German monopoly of the skies.

By the end of the winter of 1940–41 the sea and air offensive against Great Britain had failed. The Royal Air Force, with splendid material, both human and mechanical, made it impossible for the Germans to carry out daylight raids—the only effective ones from a military point of view—and the Luftwaffe finally had to confine its activities to night-bombing—causing tremendous damage among the civilian population, it is true, but doing little to help Germany in her prosecution of the war.

During the first eighteen months of the war it was proved impossible for an air-force to destroy a fleet. If the German High Command believed that it could compensate its naval weakness by its air strength, it was mistaken. At no time had the security of the British Isles been menaced—not even, in my opinion, during the evacuation of Dunkirk by the British Expeditionary Force. German arms, like those of Napoleon, were powerless before the English Channel.

But Hitler was unable to stop. The Pact of Non-Aggression with Russia guaranteed Germany security in the East. If Nazism could have come to a standstill after the defeat of France, it would have carried on a strong peace offensive against England—taking great care that there should be no British casualties—and would have dedicated itself to the task of organising Europe under German domination. England was not in a position to take the offensive on the Continent for some years, and during this time a great deal could happen. Psychologically the British nation did not "enter" the war until the terrible air-raids of the 1940–41 winter. And from a political point of view Hitler's position in the world was still a very strong one. Russia wanted peace, and Germany could rely on the raw material and agricultural produce of a whole Continent.

As Nazism could not stop, however, it undertook the conquest of Yugoslavia and Greece. This latter nation, invaded by Italy, defended herself successfully, and attacked in her turn.

But once the Balkan campaign was over what would Hitler do? The Battle of Britain had been lost. The German Army could, for instance, occupy the Iberian Peninsula, and bring fresh laurels to the German people, but this operation, apart from promising to be only a short one, would alarm the U.S.A., and the Führer did not want to strengthen the semi-belligerent attitude of Roosevelt. What, then, was to be done? Defeated from a military point of view, the Nazi régime once more turned to political warfare. If England insisted on carrying on the fight, Hitler was lost. The German fleet rarely left port, and when it did

it ran the risk of being sunk. All the battles which Germany had won since 1935, when she introduced compulsory military service, had been political ones. I have already explained how the anti-Bolshevism of Hitler and Mussolini had paralysed the democracies; the Governments of Paris and London had let the Fascist dictators do what they liked, because they feared to overthrow them. To overthrow them would mean revolution. The battle of rearmament, the battles of Spain, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Holland, Belgium and France, were all political ones. Hitler won them beforehand by anti-Bolshevist speeches and by the simple expedient of announcing that he was going to save civilisation.

Powerless against Great Britain, Ribbentropp, Hitler and Göring—the incendiary with a Conservative reputation—decided to play the anti-Bolshevik card once more. But this time they would act instead of talk; Britain—and the United States—would be convinced of the genuineness of Nazi anti-Bolshevism.

One mid-May morning of 1941, the peoples of the world learnt the startling news that Rudolf Hess, deputy-Führer and Hitler's trusted henchman, the least unpleasant of the Nazis, had landed by parachute in Scotland. The British Government published a brief note, stating that Hess was being questioned, but for the time being it could say no more. It was generally supposed that Hess had fled from the German inferno, and that, repenting of his past, he had thrown himself on the mercy of the British people.

It soon became evident, however, that the deputy-Führer was an envoy of Adolf Hitler. A minister of the British War Cabinet confirmed this suspicion in an opportune speech: Hess had arrived on a diplomatic mission.

Hitler, Ribbentropp and Göring conceded extraordinary importance to this mission—hence their choice of Hess as envoy. The personality of the young Nazi, who had risked his life in this difficult flight, was sufficient guarantee of the "seriousness" of the German proposals.

The German air-raids on London suddenly ceased. Rudolf Hess had apparently come with a message from Hitler that Germany was about to launch an attack on the Soviet Union, for which the Führer needed British support, or at least British passivity. What would the holders of anti-Bolshevik marks have to say to this? The holders of anti-Bolshevik marks now said that they had never purchased any such currency.

The gesture was a failure. Hess, who no doubt expected to be treated as a diplomatic emissary, with full diplomatic rights, including that of being allowed to return to Germany, remained in Great Britain as a prisoner of war.

At the same time as the deputy Führer was flying to Scotland,

another representative of Ribbentropp was attempting, in the Vatican, to mobilise Catholic world opinion against Bolshevism. German propaganda made use of General Franco's Spain for the peace offensive against Great Britain, and the Italian Government made discreet references to a "peace by negotiation". The manœuvres, however, did not achieve the desired result. It was already too late.

Hitler, Ribbentropp and Göring had reason for anger. England, they thought, doesn't believe us because we have deceived her in the past. Wait till they find out in London that a German attack against the hated Bolsheviks isn't bluff after all. . . .

On June 22nd, 1941, the German Army broke through the Russian frontiers and began a rapid advance towards Leningrad, Moscow and Kiev. On the same day Mr. Winston Churchill, the British Premier, after consulting the Dominions and the U.S.A., announced in a magnificent broadcast speech that Great Britain would fight on the side of Russia. The world had been saved.

The Nazi régime had attacked the Soviet Union confident that this blow would help them to win a war which at the time seemed to them lost. The invasion of Russia—they believed—would bring the whole world on their side; the Vatican, the 20 million North-American Catholics, Franco's Spain, Pétain's France, the Conservatives of Europe and America, would force Mr. Churchill to make peace. For the Nazi leaders believed that it was not Great Britain who was fighting against Germany, but Mr. Churchill, Mr. Eden and Mr. Duff Cooper. This was the profound conviction of Joachim von Ribbentropp, one of the worst diplomats which Germany, a country of bad diplomats, has ever known.

It is true that the German attack on the Soviet Union encouraged many ultra-Conservatives to carry out secret manœuvres. President Roosevelt encountered fresh difficulties, but all the same the Nazi political offensive was a tremendous failure.

Neither could a military offensive on Soviet territory be successful if Hitler could not capture Moscow before the winter, and even if he did, Russia would not be defeated. Throughout the summer the campaign was fairly successful from the German point of view, and during the month of July the Germans made a record advance. The weather had been favourable to the invader, but the Russian people, carrying out Stalin's "scorched earth" policy, and putting up a resistance which will rank in history among their great national achievements, caused tremendous damage to the gigantic military machine of the enemy.

On October 15th, 1941, however, the Nazi mechanised divisions arrived at the gates of Moscow. The capital of Russia was

by now in the front line, and through their field-glasses the German officers could see the Byzantine cupolas of the Kremlin. The ring of Moscow's artillery defences made ready for action, and the Russian Government moved to Kuibishev, although Stalin remained in the capital. Many of the civilian population also left for the interior; Moscow was preparing to defend herself. A large number of shock troops, magnificently equipped, raised the spirits of the people as they marched through Moscow on their way to the front. The German Army found itself faced with a huge city ready to defend itself street by street.

As has so often happened at critical moments in history, the High Command of the enemy suddenly hesitated. Like the troops of General Franco at the gates of Madrid in November 1936, the German Army did not dare to make a frontal attack. Moscow was a fortress. Hitler had counted on a rebellion of the Russian people against Stalin; what happened was a national rising against the Germans.

By the middle of October the bad weather set in; the German transports, which had enormous distances to cover, proved defective, and the German organisation, attacked by thousands of guerrilla fighters, broke down.

Hitler's High Command, however, had placed all its hopes on the siege of Moscow. A month later the enemy was surrounding the city with the idea of entering through the northern and southern suburbs and of cutting road and railway communications. December came, and Moscow was once again in real peril, half of the city being besieged by the enemy. At some points the Germans were 20 miles from the centre. In the south, 50 miles to the east of the important position of Tula, the invader threatened to cut the main eastern and south-eastern communications. Once the great danger of a frontal attack had disappeared, however, the Russian High Command could organise a strong counter-offensive, and in this way the Red Army destroyed the German forces which had filtered through on the East to new lines of communication. Moscow was saved. The enemy, who had hoped to turn the capital into a winter refuge for his worn-out troops, was left, defeated, in the snowfields, exposed to the implacable vengeance of the invincible Russian winter. By the middle of December the great retreat of the German Army had begun, with the Soviet troops severely punishing the fugitives.

December 1941 marks the beginning of the end of Nazism. The progress in the strength and prestige of the Nazi régime, which began in 1935, had been suddenly cut short by the defeat at Moscow, and after that the descending process began.

Conscious of their precarious military position, and needing a

quick success to distract public attention from the German *débâcle* on the Russian front, the Nazis encouraged Japan to enter the war. On Sunday, December 7th, 1941, Japanese aeroplanes launched a surprise attack on American military outposts in the Pacific, and four days later the Tokyo Government declared war on the United States.

From a military point of view Germany at the beginning of 1942 is already defeated. Only a political miracle, a universal victory of the holders of anti-Bolshevik marks, can save Hitler and Mussolini.

On December 21st, 1941, once more a Sunday, Adolf Hitler, Supreme Commander of the German Armed Forces, informed the German people that he had decided to assume the office of Commander-in-Chief. Field-Marshal von Brauchitsch was placed on the retired list, and Hitler declared that the armies in the East "must be brought from mobile progress into a stationary front".

The invasion of Russia had been a political decision of Hitler, Ribbentropp and Göring, and was carried out against the better judgment of the Wehrmacht generals. On assuming the direct command of the Army, however, Hitler threw the responsibility for this tremendous failure on to the generals. Up to June 1941 the Army and the Nazi Party were spiritually united, for there is nothing like success for smoothing out difficulties. But with the defeat of the German forces by the Red Army, a struggle began between the Nazis and the Wehrmacht. The dismissal of von Brauchitsch will have serious consequences for the Nazi régime.

Dynamism, the need to recover lost prestige, will force Hitler to open up new war fronts. He will make easy conquests; he will launch his armies against whatsoever vulnerable points he may discover in the Allied lines; he will bring war to all four quarters of the globe. But the German eagle has a broken wing, and must finally fall to earth.

THE END

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